











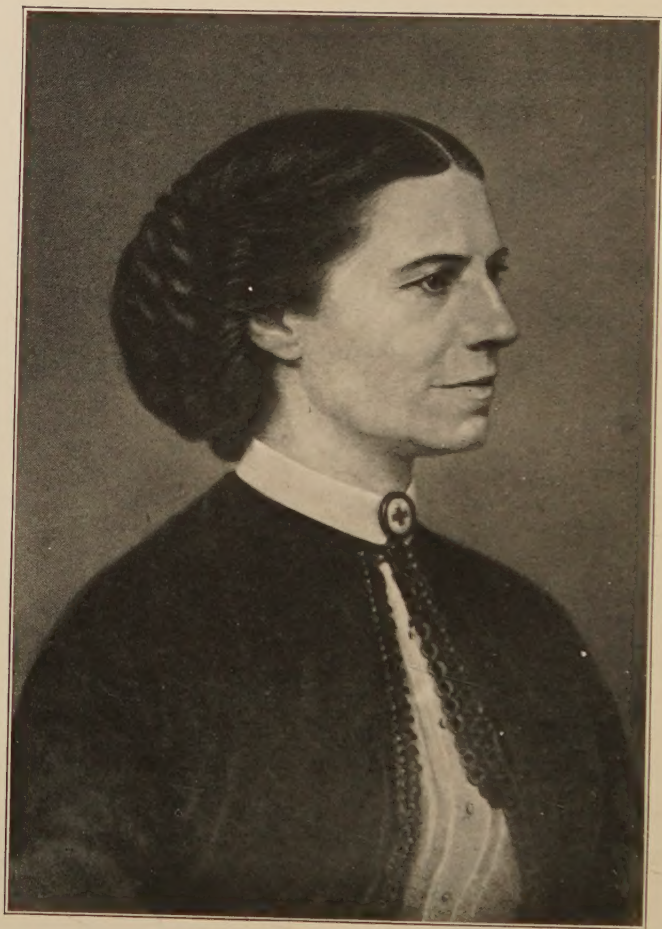


THE LIFE OF CLARA BARTON  
IN TWO VOLUMES  
VOLUME I









*Clara Barton*

921  
B293  
v0/1

# THE LIFE OF CLARA BARTON

FOUNDER OF  
THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

BY  
WILLIAM E. BARTON

AUTHOR OF "THE SOUL OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN"  
"THE PATERNITY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN," ETC.

*With Illustrations*

VOLUME I



6368

BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY  
*The Riverside Press Cambridge*  
1922

COPYRIGHT, 1922, BY WILLIAM E. BARTON

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

**The Riverside Press**  
CAMBRIDGE • MASSACHUSETTS  
PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.



TO  
STEPHEN E. BARTON  
HER TRUSTED NEPHEW; MY KINSMAN AND FRIEND



# CONTENTS

## VOLUME I

INTRODUCTION	xi
I. HER FIRST ATTEMPT AT AUTOBIOGRAPHY	i
II. THE BIRTH OF CLARA BARTON	6
III. HER ANCESTRY	9
IV. HER PARENTAGE AND INFANCY	16
V. HER SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS	22
VI. THE DAYS OF HER YOUTH	36
VII. HER FIRST EXPERIENCE AS A TEACHER	50
VIII. LEAVES FROM HER UNPUBLISHED AUTOBIOGRAPHY	56
IX. THE HEART OF CLARA BARTON	76
X. FROM SCHOOLROOM TO PATENT OFFICE	89
XI. THE BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM	107
XII. HOME AND COUNTRY	131
XIII. CLARA BARTON TO THE FRONT	172
XIV. HARPER'S FERRY TO ANTIETAM	191
XV. CLARA BARTON'S CHANGE OF BASE	225
XVI. THE ATTEMPT TO RECAPTURE SUMTER	238
XVII. FROM THE WILDERNESS TO THE JAMES	263
XVIII. TO THE END OF THE WAR	282
XIX. ANDERSONVILLE AND AFTER	304
XX. ON THE LECTURE PLATFORM	328





## ILLUSTRATIONS

CLARA BARTON AT THE TIME OF THE CIVIL WAR	<i>Frontispiece</i>
MOTHER AND FATHER OF CLARA BARTON	16
BIRTHPLACE OF CLARA BARTON	22
STONE SCHOOLHOUSE WHERE SHE FIRST TAUGHT	22
CLARA BARTON AT EIGHTEEN	52
MISS FANNIE CHILDS (MRS. BERNARD VASSALL)	66
THE SCHOOLHOUSE AT BORDENTOWN	66
FACSIMILE OF SENATOR HENRY WILSON'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT LINCOLN	298
FACSIMILE OF LETTER OF CLARA BARTON TO PRES- IDENT JOHNSON WITH INDORSEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT, GENERAL GRANT, AND OTHERS	308





## INTRODUCTION

THE life of Clara Barton is a story of unique and permanent interest; but it is more than an interesting story. It is an important chapter in the history of our country, and in that of the progress of philanthropy in this country and the world. Without that chapter, some events of large importance can never be adequately understood.

Hers was a long life. She lived to enter her tenth decade, and when she died was still so normal in the soundness of her bodily organs and in the clarity of her mind and memory that it seemed she might easily have lived to see her hundredth birthday. Hers was a life spent largely in the Nation's capital. She knew personally every president from Lincoln to Roosevelt, and was acquainted with nearly every man of prominence in our national life. When she went abroad, her associates were people of high rank and wide influence in their respective countries. No American woman received more honor while she lived, either at home or abroad, and how worthily she bore these honors those know best who knew her best.

The time has come for the publication of a definitive biography of Clara Barton. Such a book could not earlier have been prepared. The "Life of Clara Barton," by Percy H. Epler, published in 1915, was issued to meet the demand which rose immediately after her death for a comprehensive biography, and it was published with the full approval of Miss Barton's relatives and of her literary executors, including the author of the present work. But,

by agreement, the two large vaults containing some tons of manuscripts which Miss Barton left, were not opened until after the publication of Mr. Epler's book. It was the judgment of her literary executors, concurred in by Mr. Epler, that this mine of information could not be adequately explored within any period consistent with the publication of a biography such as he contemplated. For this reason, the two vaults remained unopened until his book was on the market. The contents of these vaults, containing more than forty closely packed boxes, is the chief source of the present volume, and this abundant material has been supplemented by letters and personal reminiscences from Clara Barton's relatives and intimate friends.

Clara Barton considered often the question of writing her own biography. A friend urged this duty upon her in the spring of 1876, and she promised to consider the matter. But the incessant demands made upon her time by duties that grew more steadily imperative prevented her doing this.

In 1906 the request came to her from a number of school-children that she would tell about her childhood; and she wrote a little volume of one hundred and twenty-five pages, published in 1907 by Baker and Taylor, entitled, "The Story of my Childhood." She was gratified by the reception of this little book, and seriously considered using it as the corner stone of her long contemplated autobiography. She wrote a second section of about fifteen thousand words, covering her girlhood and her experiences as a teacher at home and in Bordentown, New Jersey. This was never published, and has been utilized in this present biography.

Beside these two formal and valuable contributions toward her biography, she left journals covering most of the years from her girlhood until her death, besides vast quantities of letters received by her and copies of her replies. Her personal letters to her intimate friends were not copied, as a rule, but it has been possible to gather some hundreds of these. Letter-books, scrap-books, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, records of the American Red Cross, and papers, official and personal, swell the volume of material for this book to proportions not simply embarrassing, but almost overwhelming.

She appears never to have destroyed anything. Her temperament and the habits of a lifetime impelled her to save every scrap of material bearing upon her work and the subjects in which she was interested. She gathered, and with her own hand labeled, and neatly tied up her documents, and preserved them against the day when she should be able to sift and classify them and prepare them for such use as might ultimately be made of them. It troubled her that she was leaving these in such great bulk, and she hoped vainly for the time when she could go through them, box by box, and put them into shape. But they accumulated far more rapidly than she could have assorted them, and so they were left until her death, and still remained untouched, until December, 1915, when the vaults were opened and the heavy task began of examining this material, selecting from it the papers that tell the whole story of her life, and preparing the present volumes. If this book is large, it is because the material compelled it to be so. It could easily have been ten times as thick.

The will of Clara Barton named as her executor her

beloved and trusted nephew, Stephen E. Barton. It also named a committee of literary executors, to whom she entrusted the use of her manuscripts for such purpose, biographical or otherwise, as they should deem best. The author of these volumes was named by her as a member of that committee. The committee elected him as its chairman, and requested him to undertake the preparation of the biography. This task was undertaken gladly, for the writer knew and loved his kinswoman and held her in honor and affection; but he knew too well the magnitude of the task ahead of him to be altogether eager to accept it. The burden, however, has been measurably lightened by the assistance of Miss Saidee F. Riccius, a grand-niece of Miss Barton, who, under the instruction of the literary executors, and the immediate direction of Stephen E. Barton and the author, has rendered invaluable service, without which the author could not have undertaken this work.

In her will, written a few days before her death, Miss Barton virtually apologized to the committee and to her biographer for the heavy task which she bequeathed to them. She said:

"I regret exceedingly that such a labor should devolve upon my friends as the overlooking of the letters of a lifetime, which should properly be done by me, and shall be, if I am so fortunate as to regain a sufficient amount of strength to enable me to do it. I have never destroyed my letters, regarding them as the surest chronological testimony of my life, whenever I could find the time to attempt to write it. That time has never come to me, and the letters still wait my call."

They still were there, undisturbed, thousands of them,



when the vaults were opened, and none of them have been destroyed or mutilated. They are of every sort, personal and official; and they bear their consistent and cumulative testimony to her indefatigability, her patience, her heroic resolution, and most of all to her greatness of heart and integrity of soul.

Interesting and valuable in their record of every period and almost every day and hour of her long and eventful life, they are the indisputable record of the birth and development of the organization which almost single-handed she created, the American Red Cross.

Among those who suggested to Miss Barton the desirability of her writing the story of her own life, was Mr. Houghton, senior partner in the firm of Houghton, Mifflin and Company. He had one or more personal conferences with her relating to this matter. Had she been able to write the story of her own life, she would have expected it to be published by that firm. It is to the author a gratifying circumstance that this work, which must take the place of her autobiography, is published by the firm with whose senior member she first discussed the preparation of such a work.

The author of this biography was a relative and friend of Clara Barton, and knew her intimately. By her request he conducted her funeral services, and spoke the last words at her grave. His own knowledge of her has been supplemented and greatly enlarged by the personal reminiscences of her nearer relatives and of the friends who lived under her roof, and those who accompanied her on her many missions of mercy.

In a work where so much compression was inevitable, some incidents may well have received scant mention



which deserved fuller treatment. The question of proportion is never an easy one to settle in a work of this character. If she had given any direction, it would have been that little be said about her, and much about the work she loved. That work, the founding of the American Red Cross, must receive marked emphasis in a *Life of Clara Barton*: for she was its mother. She conceived the American Red Cross, carried it under her heart for years before it could be brought forth, nurtured it in its cradle, and left it to her country and the world, an organization whose record in the great World War shines bright against that black cloud of horror, as the emblem of mercy and of hope.

Wherever, in America or in lands beyond, the flag of the Red Cross flies beside the Stars and Stripes, there the soul of Clara Barton marches on.

FIRST CHURCH STUDY  
OAK PARK, *July 16, 1921*

THE LIFE OF CLARA BARTON



# THE LIFE OF CLARA BARTON

## CHAPTER I

### HER FIRST ATTEMPT AT AUTOBIOGRAPHY

THOUGH she had often been importuned to furnish to the public some account of her life and work, Clara Barton's first autobiographical outline was not written until September, 1876, when Susan B. Anthony requested her to prepare a sketch of her life for an encyclopædia of noted women of America. Miss Barton labored long over her reply. She knew that the story must be short, and that she must clip conjunctions and prepositions and omit "all the sweetest and best things." When she had finished the sketch, she was appalled at its length, and still was unwilling that any one else should make it shorter; so she sent it with stamps for its return in case it should prove too long. "It has not an adjective in it," she said.

Her original draft is still preserved, and reads as follows:

FOR SUSAN B. ANTHONY  
SKETCH FOR CYCLOPÆDIA

SEPTEMBER, 1876

BARTON, CLARA; her father, Capt. Stephen Barton, a non-commissioned officer under "Mad Anthony Wayne," was a farmer in Oxford, Mass. Clara, youngest child,

finished her education at Clinton, N.Y. Teacher, popularized free schools in New Jersey.

First woman appointed to an independent clerkship by Government at Washington.

On outbreak of Civil War, went to aid suffering soldiers. Labored in advance and independent of commissions. Never in hospitals; selecting as scene of operations the battle-field from its earliest moment, 'till the wounded and dead were removed or cared for; carrying her own supplies by Government transportation.

At the battles of Cedar Mountain, Second Bull Run, Chantilly, South Mountain, Falmouth and "Old Fredericksburg," Siege of Charleston, Morris Island, Wagner, Wilderness, Fredericksburg, The Mine, Deep Bottom, through sieges of Petersburg and Richmond under Butler and Grant.

At Annapolis on arrival of prisoners.

Established search for missing soldiers, and, aided by Dorence Atwater, enclosed cemetery, identified and marked the graves of Andersonville.

Lectured on Incidents of the War in 1866-67. In 1869 went to Europe for health. In Switzerland on outbreak of Franco-Prussian War; tendered services. Was invited by Grand Duchess of Baden, daughter of Emperor William, to aid in establishing her hospitals. On fall of Strassburg entered with German Army, remained eight months, instituted work for women which held twelve hundred persons from beggary and clothed thirty thousand.

Entered Metz on its fall. Entered Paris the day succeeding the fall of Commune; remained two months, distributing money and clothing which she carried. Met the poor of every besieged city of France, giving help.

Is representative of the "Comité International of the Red Cross" of Geneva. Honorary and only woman member of Comité de Strasbourgoes. Was decorated with the Gold Cross of Remembrance by the Grand Duke and

Duchess of Baden and with the "Iron Cross" by the Emperor and Empress of Germany.

Miss Anthony regarded the sketch with the horror of offended modesty.

"For Heaven's sake, Clara," she wrote, "put some flesh and clothes on this skeleton!"

Thus admonished, Miss Barton set to work to drape the bones of her first attempt, and was in need of some assistance from Miss Anthony and others. The work as completed was not wholly her own. The adjectives, which had been conspicuously absent from the first draft together with some characterizations of Miss Barton and her work, were supplied by Miss Anthony and her editors. It need not here be reprinted in its final form; for it is accessible in Miss Anthony's book. As it finally appeared, it is several times as long as when Clara Barton wrote it, and is more Miss Anthony's than Miss Barton's.

In the foregoing account, mention is made of her being an official member of the International Committee of the Red Cross. In that capacity she did not at that time represent any American organization known as the Red Cross, for there was no such body. Although such an organization had been in existence in Europe from the time of our Civil War, and the Reverend Dr. Henry W. Bellows, late of the Christian Commission, had most earnestly endeavored to organize a branch of it in this country, and to secure official representation from America in the international body, the proposal had been met not merely by indifference, but by hostility.

Clara Barton wrote her autobiographical sketch from a sanitarium. She had not yet recovered from the strain of her service in the Franco-Prussian War. One reason



why she did not recover more rapidly was that she was bearing on her heart the burden of this as yet unborn organization, and as yet had found no friends of sufficient influence and faith to afford to America a share in the honor of belonging to the sisterhood of nations that marched under that banner.

The outbreak of the World War found America unprepared save only in her wealth of material resources, her high moral purpose, and her ability to adapt her forms of organized life to changed and unwelcome conditions. The rapidity with which she increased her army and her navy to a strength that made it possible for her to turn the scale, where the fate of the world hung trembling in the balance, was not more remarkable than her skill in adapting her institutions of peace to the exigencies of war. Most of the agencies, which, under the direction of civilians, ministered to men in arms had either to be created out of hand or adapted from institutions formed in time of peace and for other objects. But the American Red Cross was already organized and in active service. It was a factor in the fight from the first day of the world's agony, through the invasion of Belgium, and the three years of our professed neutrality; and by the time of America's own entrance into the war it had assumed such proportions that everywhere the Red Cross was seen floating beside the Stars and Stripes. Every one knew what it stood for. It was the emblem of mercy, even as the flag of our Nation was the symbol of liberty and the hope of the world.

The history of the American Red Cross cannot be written apart from the story of its founder, Clara Barton.

For years before it came into being, her voice almost alone pleaded for it, and to her persistent and almost sole endeavor it came at length to be established in America. For other years she was its animating spirit, its voice, its soul. Had she lived to see its work in the great World War, she would have been humbly and unselfishly grateful for her part in its beginnings, and overjoyed that it had outgrown them. The story of the founding and of the early history of the American Red Cross is the story of Clara Barton.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BIRTH OF CLARA BARTON

CLARA BARTON was a Christmas gift to the world. She was born December 25, 1821. Her parents named her Clarissa Harlowe. It was a name with interesting literary associations.

Novels now grow overnight and are forgotten in a day. The paper mills are glutted with the waste of yesterday's popular works of fiction; and the perishability of paper is all that prevents the stopping of all the wheels of progress with the accumulation of obsolete "best-sellers." But it was not so in 1821. The novels of Samuel Richardson, issued in the middle of the previous century, were still popular. He wrote "Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded," a novel named for its heroine, a pure and simple-minded country girl, who repelled the dishonorable proposals of her employer until he came to respect her, and married her, and they lived happily ever after. The plot of this story lives again in a thousand moving-picture dramas, in which the heroine is a shop girl or an art student; but Richardson required two volumes to tell the story, and it ran through five editions in a year. He also wrote "Sir Charles Grandison," and it required six volumes to portray that hero's smug priggishness; but the Reverend Dr. Finney, president of Oberlin College, who was also the foremost evangelist of his time, and whose system of theology wrought in its day a revolution, was not the only distinguished man who bore the name of Charles Grandison.

But Richardson's greatest literary triumph was "Clarissa Harlowe." Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was not far wrong when she declared that the chambermaids of all nations wept over Pamela, and that all the ladies of quality were on their knees to Richardson imploring him to spare Clarissa. Clarissa was not a servant like Pamela: she was a lady of quality, and she had a lover socially her equal, but morally on a par with a considerable number of the gentry of his day. His name, Lovelace, became the popular designation of the gentleman profligate. Clarissa's sorrows at his hands ran through eight volumes, and, as the lachrymose sentiment ran out to volume after volume, the gentlewomen of the English-reading world wept tears that might have made another flood. Samuel Richardson wrote the story of "Clarissa Harlowe" in 1748, but the story still was read, and the name of the heroine was loved, in 1821.

But Clarissa Harlowe Barton did not permanently bear the incubus of so long a name. Among her friends she was always Clara, and though for years she signed her name "Clara H. Barton," the convenience and rhythm of the shorter name won over the time-honored sentiment attached to the title of the novel, and the world knows her simply as Clara Barton.

He who rides on the electric cars from Worcester to Webster will pass Bartlett's Upper Mills, where a weather-beaten sign at the crossroads points the way "TO CLARA BARTON'S BIRTHPLACE." About a mile from the main street, on the summit of a rounded hill, the visitor will find the house where she was born. It stands with its side to the road, a hall dividing it through the middle. It is an unpretentious home, but comfortable,

one story high at the eaves, but rising with the rafters to afford elevation for chambers upstairs. In the rear room, on the left side, on the ground floor, the children of the Barton family were born. Clara was the fifth and youngest child, ten years younger than her sister next older. The eldest child, Dorothy, was born October 2, 1804, and died April 19, 1846. The next two children were sons, Stephen, the third to bear the name, born March 29, 1806, and David, born August 15, 1808. Then came another daughter, Sarah, born March 20, 1811. These four children followed each other at intervals of a little more than two years; but Clara had between her and the other children the wide gap of more than a decade. Her brothers were fifteen and thirteen, respectively, and her sister was "going on eleven" when she arrived. She came into a world that was already well grown up and fully occupied with concerns of its own. Had there been between her and the other children an ascending series of four or five graduated steps of heads, the first a little taller than her own, and the others rising in orderly sequence, the rest of the universe would not have been quite so formidable; but she was the sole representative of babyhood in the home at the time of her arrival. So she began her somewhat solitary pilgrimage, from a cradle fringed about with interested and affectionate observers, all of whom had been babies a good while before, but had forgotten about it, into that vast and vague domain inhabited by the adult portion of the human race; and while she was not unattended, her journey had its elements of solitude.



## CHAPTER III

### HER ANCESTRY

THE Bartons of America are descended from a number of immigrant ancestors, who have come to this country from England, Scotland, and Ireland. The name, however, is neither Scotch nor Irish, but English. While the several families in Great Britain have not as yet traced their ancestry to a single source, there appears to have been such a source. The ancestral home of the Barton family is Lancashire. The family is of Norman stock, and came to England with William the Conqueror, deriving their English surname from Barton Manor in Lancashire. From 1086, when the name was recorded in the Domesday Book, it is found in the records of Lancashire.

The derivation of the name is disputed. It is said that originally it was derived from the Saxon *bere*, barley, and *tun*, a field, and to mean the enclosed lands immediately adjacent to a manor; but most English names that end with "ton" are derived from "town" with a prefix, and it is claimed that *bar*, or defense, and *ton*, or town, once meant a defended or enclosed town, or one who protects a town. The name is held to mean "defender of the town."

In the time of Henry I, Sir Leysing de Barton, Knight, was mentioned as a feudal vassal of lands between the rivers Ribbe and Mersey, under Stephen, Count of Mortagne, grandson of William the Conqueror, who later became King Stephen of England. Sir Leysing de Bar-



ton was the father of Matthew de Barton, and the grandfather of several granddaughters, one of whom was Editha de Barton, Lady of Barton Manor. She inherited the great estate, and was a woman of note in her day. She married Augustine de Barton, possibly a cousin, by whom she had two children, John de Barton, who died before his mother, and a daughter Cecilly.

After the death of Augustine de Barton, his widow, Lady Editha, married Gilbert de Notton, a landed proprietor of Lincolnshire, who also had possessions in Yorkshire and Lancashire. He had three sons by a previous marriage, one of whom, William, married Cecilly de Barton, daughter of Editha and her first husband Augustine. Their son, named for his uncle, Gilbert de Notton, inherited the Barton Manor and assumed the surname Barton.

The Barton estate was large, containing several villages and settlements. The homestead was at Barton-on-Irwell, now in the municipality of Eccles, near the city of Manchester.

Other Barton families in England are quite possibly descended from younger sons of the original Barton line.

The arms of the Bartons of Barton were, *Argent, three boars' heads, armed, or.*

In the Wars of the Roses the Bartons were with the house of Lancaster, and the Red Rose is the traditional flower of the Barton family. Clara Barton, when she wore flowers, habitually wore red roses; and whatever her attire there was almost invariably about it somewhere a touch of red, "her color," she called it, as it had been the color of her ancestors for many generations.

In the seventeenth century there were several families

of Bartons in the American colonies. The name is found early in Virginia, in Pennsylvania, in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and other colonies.

Salem had two families of Bartons, probably related, — those of Dr. John Barton, physician and surgeon, who came from Huntingdonshire, England, in 1672, and was prominent in the early life of Salem, and Edward Barton, who arrived thirty-two years earlier, but, receiving a grant of land on the Piscataqua, removed to Portsmouth, and about 1666 to Cape Porpoise, Maine. On account of Indian troubles, the homestead was deserted for some years, but Cape Porpoise continued to be the traditional home of this branch of the Barton family.

Edward's eldest son, Matthew, returned to Salem, and lived there, at Portsmouth, and at Cape Porpoise. His eldest son, born probably at Salem in or about 1664, was Samuel Barton, founder of the Barton family of Oxford.

Not long after the pathetic witchcraft delusion of Salem, a number of enterprising families migrated from Salem to Framingham, among them the family of Samuel Barton. On July 19, 1716, as recorded in the Suffolk County Registry of Deeds in Boston, Jonathan Provender, husbandman, of Oxford, sold to Samuel Barton, Sr., husbandman, of Framingham, a tract of land including about one-thirtieth of the village of Oxford, as well as a fourth interest in two mills, a sawmill and a gristmill.

In 1720, Samuel Barton and a few of his neighbors met at the home of John Towne, where, after prayer, "they mutually considered their obligations to promote the kingdom of their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ," and

covenanted together to seek to establish and build a church of Christ in Oxford. On January 3, 1721, the church was formally constituted, Samuel Barton and his wife bringing their letters of dismissal from the church in Framingham of which both were members, and uniting as charter members of the new church in Oxford. The Reverend John Campbell was their first pastor. For over forty years he led his people, and his name lives in the history of that town as a man of learning, piety, and rare capacity for spiritual leadership. Long after his death, it was discovered that he was Colonel John Campbell, of Scotland, heir to the earldom of Loudon, who had fled from Scotland for political reasons, and who became a soldier of Christ in the new world.

Samuel Barton, son of Edward and Martha Barton, and grandson of Edward and Elizabeth Barton, died in Oxford September 12, 1732. His wife, Hannah Bridges, died there March 13, 1737. From them sprang the family of the Oxford Bartons, whose most illustrious representative was Clara Barton.

The maternal side of this line, that of Bridges, began in America with Edmund Bridges, who came to Massachusetts from England in 1635, and lived successively at Lynn, Rowley, and Ipswich. His eldest son, Edmund, Jr., was born about 1637, married Sarah Towne in 1659, lived in Topsfield and Salem, and died in 1682. The fourth of their five children was a daughter, Hannah, who, probably at Salem about 1690, married Samuel Barton, progenitor of the Bartons of Oxford, to which town he removed from Framingham in 1716.

Edmund, youngest son of Samuel and Hannah Barton, was born in Framingham, August 15, 1715. He married,

April 9, 1739, Anna Flint, of Salem. She was born June 9, 1718, eldest daughter of Stephen Flint and his wife, Hannah Moulton. Anna Flint was the granddaughter of John Flint, of Salem Village (Danvers), and great-granddaughter of Thomas Flint, who came to Salem before 1650.

Edmund settled in Sutton, and owned lands there and in Oxford. He and his wife became members of the First Church in Sutton, and later transferred their membership to the Second Church in Sutton, which subsequently became the First Church in Millbury. He served in the French War, and was at Fort Edward in 1753. He died December 13, 1799, and Anna, his wife, died March 20, 1795.

The eldest son of Edmund and Anna Barton was Stephen Barton, born June 10, 1740, at Sutton. He studied medicine with Dr. Green, of Leicester, and practiced his profession in Oxford and in Maine. He had unusual professional skill, as well as great sympathy and charity. He married at Oxford, May 28, 1765, Dorothy Moore, who was born at Oxford, April 12, 1747, daughter of Elijah Moore and Dorothy Learned. On her father's side she was the granddaughter of Richard, great-granddaughter of Jacob, and great-great-granddaughter of John Moore. John Moore and his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Philemon Whale, bought a home in Sudbury in 1642. Their son, Jacob, married Elizabeth Looker, daughter of Henry Looker, of Sudbury, and lived in Sudbury. Their son Richard, born in Sudbury in 1670, married Mary Collins, daughter of Samuel Collins, of Middletown, Connecticut, and granddaughter of Edward Collins, of Cambridge. Richard Moore was one of the



most capable and trusted men in early Oxford. Dorothy Learned, wife of Elijah Moore, was the daughter of Colonel Ebenezer Learned, the largest landowner in Oxford, one of the original thirty proprietors. He was a man of superior personality, for thirty-two years one of the selectmen, for many years chairman of that body, and moderator of town meetings, a justice of the peace, a representative in the Great and General Court, and an officer in the militia from 1718 to 1750, beginning as Ensign and reaching the rank of Colonel. He was active in the affairs of the town, the church, and the military organization during his long and useful life. His wife was Deborah Haynes, daughter of John Haynes, of Sudbury. He was the son of Isaac Learned, Jr., of Framingham, who had been a soldier in the Narraganset War, and his wife, Sarah Bigelow, daughter of John Bigelow, of Watertown. Isaac Learned was the son of Isaac Learned, Sr., of Woburn and Chelmsford, and his wife, Mary Stearns, daughter of Isaac Stearns, of Watertown. The parents of Isaac Learned, Sr., were William and Goditha Learned, members of the Charlestown Church in 1632, and of Woburn Church in 1642.

The Learned family shared with the Barton family in the formation of the English settlement in Oxford, and were intimately related by intermarriage and many mutual interests. Brigadier-General Ebenezer Learned, a distinguished officer in the Revolution, was a brother of Dorothy Learned Moore, the great-grandmother of Clara Barton.

Dr. Stephen Barton and his wife, Dorothy Moore, had thirteen children. Their sons were Elijah Moore, born October 12, 1765, and died June 13, 1769; Gideon, born

March 29, 1767, and died October 27, 1770; Stephen, born August 18, 1774; Elijah Moore, born August 10, 1784; Gideon, born June 18, 1786; and Luke, born September 3, 1791. The first two sons died at an early age; the four remaining sons lived to marry, and three of them lived in Maine. The daughters of Dr. Stephen Barton and Dorothy, his wife, were Pamela, Clarissa Harlowe, Hannah, Parthena, Polly, and Dolly.

It is interesting to note in the names of these daughters a departure from the common New England custom of seeking Bible names, and the naming of the first two daughters after the two principal heroines of Samuel Richardson.

Of this family, the third son, and the eldest to survive, was Stephen Barton, Jr., known as Captain Stephen Barton, father of Clara Barton.



## CHAPTER IV

### HER PARENTAGE AND INFANCY

CAPTAIN STEPHEN BARTON won his military title by that system of *post-bellum* promotion familiar in all American communities. He was a non-commissioned officer in the wars against the Indians. He was nineteen when he enlisted, and marched on foot with his troop from Boston to Philadelphia, which at that time was the Nation's capital. The main army was then at Detroit under command of General Wayne, whom the soldiers lovingly knew as "Mad Anthony." William Henry Harrison and Richard M. Johnson, later President and Vice-President of the United States, were then lieutenants, and Stephen Barton fought side by side with them. He was present when Tecumseh was slain, and at the signing of the treaty of peace which followed. His military service extended over three years. At the close of the war he marched home on foot through northern Ohio and central New York. He and the other officers were greatly charmed by the Genesee and Mohawk valleys, and he purchased land somewhere in the vicinity of Rochester. He had some thought of establishing a home in that remote region, but it was so far distant from civilization that he sold his New York land and made his home in Oxford.

In 1796, Stephen Barton returned from the Indian War. He was then twenty-two years of age. Eight years later he married Sarah Stone, who was only seventeen. They established their home west of Oxford, near Charl-



MOTHER AND FATHER OF CLARA BARTON



ton, and later removed to the farm where Clara Barton was born.

It was a modest home, and Stephen Barton was a hard-working man, though a man of influence in the community. He served often as moderator of town meetings and as selectman for the town. He served also as a member of the Legislature. But he wrought with his own hands in the tillage of his farm, and in the construction of most of the articles of furniture in his home, including the cradle in which his children were rocked.

Stephen Barton combined a military spirit with a gentle disposition and a broad spirit of philanthropy. Sarah Stone was a woman of great decision of character, and a quick temper. She was a housewife of the good old New England sort, looking well to the ways of her household and eating not the bread of idleness. From her father Clara Barton inherited those humanitarian tendencies which became notably characteristic, and from her mother she derived a strong will which achieved results almost regardless of opposition. Her mother's hot temper found its restraint in her through the inherited influence of her father's poise and benignity. Of him she wrote:

His military habits and tastes never left him. Those were also strong political days—Andrew Jackson Days—and very naturally my father became my instructor in military and political lore. I listened breathlessly to his war stories. Illustrations were called for and we made battles and fought them. Every shade of military etiquette was regarded. Colonels, captains, and sergeants were given their proper place and rank. So with the political world; the President, Cabinet, and leading officers of the government were learned by heart, and nothing grati-

fied the keen humor of my father more than the parrot-like readiness with which I lisped these difficult names. I thought the President might be as large as the meeting-house, and the Vice-President perhaps the size of the school-house. And yet, when later I, like all the rest of our country's people, was suddenly thrust into the mysteries of war, and had to find and take my place and part in it, I found myself far less a stranger to the conditions than most women, or even ordinary men for that matter. I never addressed a colonel as captain, got my cavalry on foot, or mounted my infantry!

When a little child upon his knee he told me that, as he lay helpless in the tangled marshes of Michigan the muddy water oozed up from the track of an officer's horse and saved him from death by thirst. And that a mouthful of a lean dog that had followed the march saved him from starvation. When he told me how the feathered arrow quivered in the flesh and the tomahawk swung over the white man's head, he told me also, with tears of honest pride, of the great and beautiful country that had sprung up from those wild scenes of suffering and danger. How he loved these new States for which he gave the strength of his youth!

Two sons and two daughters were born to Stephen and Sarah Barton in their early married life. Then for ten years no other children were born to them. On Christmas, 1821, their eldest daughter, Dorothy, was as old as her mother had been at the time of their marriage. Their eldest son, Stephen, was fifteen, the younger son, David, was thirteen, and the daughter, Sally, was ten. The family had long considered itself complete, when the household received Clara as a Christmas present. Her brothers and sisters were too old to be her playmates. They were her protectors, but not her companions. She was a little child in the midst of a household of grown-up



people, as they seemed to her. In her little book entitled "The Story of my Childhood," she thus describes her brothers and sisters:

I became the seventh member of a household consisting of the father and mother, two sisters and two brothers, each of whom for his and her intrinsic merits and special characteristics deserves an individual history, which it shall be my conscientious duty to portray as far as possible as these pages progress. For the present it is enough to say that each one manifested an increasing personal interest in the newcomer, and, as soon as developments permitted, set about instructing her in the various directions most in accord with the tastes and pursuits of each.

Of the two sisters, the elder was already a teacher. The younger followed soon, and naturally my book education became their first care, and under these conditions it is little to say, that I have no knowledge of ever learning to read, or of a time that I did not do my own story reading. The other studies followed very early.

My elder brother, Stephen, was a noted mathematician. He inducted me into the mystery of figures. Multiplication, division, subtraction, halves, quarters, and wholes, soon ceased to be a mystery, and no toy equaled my little slate. But the younger brother had entirely other tastes, and would have none of these things. My father was a lover of horses, and one of the first in the vicinity to introduce blooded stock. He had large lands, for New England. He raised his own colts; and Highlanders, Virginians, and Morgans pranced the fields in idle contempt of the solid old farm-horses.

Of my brother, David, to say that he was fond of horses describes nothing; one could almost add that he was fond of nothing else. He was the Buffalo Bill of the surrounding country, and here commences his part of my education. It was his delight to take me, a little girl of five years old, to the field, seize a couple of those beautiful



young creatures, broken only to the halter and bit, and gathering the reins of both bridles firmly in hand, throw me upon the back of one colt, spring upon the other himself, and catching me by one foot, and bidding me "cling fast to the mane," gallop away over field and fen, in and out among the other colts in wild glee like ourselves. They were merry rides we took. This was my riding-school. I never had any other, but it served me well. To this day my seat on a saddle or on the back of a horse is as secure and tireless as in a rocking-chair, and far more pleasurable. Sometimes, in later years, when I found myself suddenly on a strange horse in a trooper's saddle, flying for life or liberty in front of pursuit, I blessed the baby lessons of the wild gallops among the beautiful colts.

One of the bravest of women, Clara Barton was a child of unusual timidity. Looking back upon her earliest recollections she said, "I remember nothing but fear." Her earliest memory was of her grief in failing to catch "a pretty bird" when she was two and a half years old. She cried in disappointment, and her mother ran to learn what was the trouble. On hearing her complaint, that "Baby" had lost a pretty bird which she had almost caught, her mother asked, "Where did it go, Baby?" "Baby" indicated a small round hole under the doorstep, and her mother gave a terrified scream. That scream awoke terror in the mind of the little girl, and she never quite recovered from it. The "bird" she had almost caught was a snake.

Her next memory also was one of fear. The family had gone to a funeral, leaving her in the care of her brother David. She told of it afterward as follows:

I can picture the large family sitting-room with its

four open windows, which room I was not to leave, and my guardian was to remain near me. Some outside duty called him from the house and I was left to my own observations. A sudden thunder-shower came up; massive rifts of clouds rolled up in the east, and the lightning darted among them like blazing fires. The thunder gave them language and my terrified imagination endowed them with life.

Among the animals of the farm was a huge old ram, that doubtless upon some occasion had taught me to respect him, and of which I had a mortal fear. My terrors transformed those rising, rolling clouds into a whole heaven full of angry rams, marching down upon me. Again my screams alarmed, and the poor brother, conscience-stricken that he had left his charge, rushed breathless in, to find me on the floor in hysterics, a condition of things he had never seen; and neither memory nor history relates how either of us got out of it.

In these later years I have observed that writers of sketches, in a friendly desire to compliment me, have been wont to dwell upon my courage, representing me as personally devoid of fear, not even knowing the feeling. However correct that may have become, it is evident I was not constructed that way, as in the earlier years of my life I remember nothing but fear.

## CHAPTER V'

### HER SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

CLARA BARTON'S education began at her cradle. She was not able to remember when she learned to read. When three years old she had acquired the art of reading, and her lessons in spelling, arithmetic, and geography began in her infancy. Both of her sisters and her eldest brother were school-teachers. Recalling their efforts, she said: "I had no playmates, but in effect six fathers and mothers. They were a family of school-teachers. All took charge of me, all educated me, each according to personal taste. My two sisters were scholars and artistic, and strove in that direction. My brothers were strong, ruddy, daring young men, full of life and business."

Before she was four years old she entered school. By that time she was able to read easily, and could spell words of three syllables. She told the story of her first schooling in an account which must not be abridged:

My home instruction was by no means permitted to stand in the way of the "regular school," which consisted of two terms each year, of three months each. The winter term included not only the large boys and girls, but in reality the young men and young women of the neighborhood. An exceptionally fine teacher often drew the daily attendance of advanced scholars for several miles. Our district had this good fortune. I introduce with pleasure and with reverence the name of Richard Stone; a firmly set, handsome young man of twenty-six or seven, of commanding figure and presence, combining all the elements of a teacher with a discipline never questioned.



BIRTHPLACE OF CLARA BARTON



STONE SCHOOLHOUSE WHERE SHE FIRST TAUGHT





His glance of disapproval was a reprimand, his frown something he never needed to go beyond. The love and respect of his pupils exceeded even their fear. It was no uncommon thing for summer teachers to come twenty miles to avail themselves of the winter term of "Colonel" Stone, for he was a high militia officer, and at that young age was a settled man with a family of four little children. He had married at eighteen.

I am thus particular in my description of him, both because of my childish worship of him, and because I shall have occasion to refer to him later. The opening of his first term was a signal for the Barton family, and seated on the strong shoulders of my stalwart brother Stephen, I was taken a mile through the tall drifts to school. I have often questioned if in this movement there might not have been a touch of mischievous curiosity on the part of these not at all dull youngsters, to see what my performance at school might be.

I was, of course, the baby of the school. I recall no introduction to the teacher, but was set down among the many pupils in the by no means spacious room, with my spelling book and the traditional slate, from which nothing could separate me. I was seated on one of the low benches and sat very still. At length the majestic schoolmaster seated himself, and taking a primer, called the class of little ones to him. He pointed the letters to each. I named them all, and was asked to spell some little words, "dog," "cat," etc., whereupon I hesitatingly informed him that I did "not spell there." "Where do you spell?" "I spell in 'Artichoke,'" that being the leading word in the three syllable column in my speller. He good naturedly conformed to my suggestion, and I was put into the "artichoke" class to bear my part for the winter, and read and "spell for the head." When, after a few weeks, my brother Stephen was declared by the committee to be too advanced for a common school, and was placed in charge of an important school himself, my



unique transportation devolved upon the other brother, David.

No colts now, but solid wading through the high New England drifts.

The Reverend Mr. Menseur of the Episcopal church of Leicester, Massachusetts, if I recollect aright, wisely comprehending the grievous inadaptability of the schoolbooks of that time, had compiled a small geography and atlas suited to young children, known as Menseur's Geography. It was a novelty, as well as a beneficence; nothing of its kind having occurred to makers of the schoolbooks of that day. They seemed not to have recognized the existence of a state of childhood in the intellectual creation. During the winter I had become the happy possessor of a Menseur's Geography and Atlas. It is questionable if my satisfaction was fully shared by others of the household. I required a great deal of assistance in the study of my maps, and became so interested that I could not sleep, and was not willing that others should, but persisted in waking my poor drowsy sister in the cold winter mornings to sit up in bed and by the light of a tallow candle, help me to find mountains, rivers, counties, oceans, lakes, islands, isthmuses, channels, cities, towns, and capitals.

The next May the summer school opened, taught by Miss Susan Torrey. Again, I write the name reverently, as gracing one of the most perfect of personalities. I was not alone in my childish admiration, for her memory remained a living reality in the town long years after the gentle spirit fled. My sisters were both teaching other schools, and I must make my own way, which I did, walking a mile with my one precious little schoolmate, Nancy Fitts. Nancy Fitts! The playmate of my childhood; the "chum" of laughing girlhood; the faithful, trusted companion of young womanhood, and the beloved life friend that the relentless grasp of time has neither changed, nor taken from me.

On entering the wide-open door of the inviting school-house, armed with some most unsuitable reader, a spelling book, geography, atlas, and slate, I was seized with an intense fear at finding myself with no member of the family near, and my trepidation became so visible that the gentle teacher, relieving me of my burden of books, took me tenderly on her lap and did her best to reassure and calm me. At length I was given my seat, with a desk in front for my atlas and slate, my toes at least a foot from the floor, and that became my daily, happy home for the next three months.

All the members of Clara Barton's household became her teachers, except her mother, who looked with interest, and not always with approval, on the methods of instruction practiced by the others. Captain Barton was teaching her military tactics, David was teaching her to ride horseback, Sally, and later Dorothy, established a kind of school at home and practiced on their younger sister, and Stephen contributed his share in characteristic fashion. Sarah Stone alone attempted nothing until the little daughter should be old enough to learn to do housework.

"My mother, like the sensible woman that she was, seemed to conclude that there were plenty of instructors without her," said Miss Barton. "She attempted very little, but rather regarded the whole thing as a sort of mental conglomeration, and looked on with a kind of amused curiosity to see what they would make of it. Indeed, I heard her remark many years after that I came out of it with a more level head than she would have thought possible."

Clara Barton's first piece of personal property was a sprightly, medium-sized white dog, with silky ears and a

short tail. His name was Button. Her affection for Button continued throughout her life. Of him she said:

My first individual ownership was "Button." In personality (if the term be admissible), Button represented a sprightly, medium-sized, very white dog, with silky ears, sparkling black eyes and a very short tail. His bark spoke for itself. Button belonged to me. No other claim was instituted, or ever had been. It was said that on my entrance into the family, Button constituted himself my guardian. He watched my first steps and tried to pick me up when I fell down. One was never seen without the other. He proved an apt and obedient pupil, obeying me precept upon precept, if not line upon line. He stood on two feet to ask for his food, and made a bow on receiving it, walked on three legs when very lame, and so on, after the manner of his crude instruction; went everywhere with me through the day, waited patiently while I said my prayers and continued his guard on the foot of the bed at night. Button shared my board as well as my bed.

• After her first year's instruction at the hands of Colonel Stone, that gentleman ceased his connection with the common schools, and established what was known as the Oxford High School, an institution of great repute in its day. This left the district school to be taught by the members of the Barton household. For the next three years Clara's sisters were her public school-teachers in the autumn and spring, and her brother Stephen had charge of the school in the winter terms. Two things she remembered about those years. One was her preternatural shyness. She was sensitive and retiring to a degree that seemed to forbid all hope of her making much progress in study with other children. The other was that she had a fondness for writing verses, some of which

her brothers and sisters preserved and used to tease her with in later years. One thing she learned outside the schoolroom, and she never forgot it. That was how to handle a horse. She inherited her mother's sidesaddle, and though she protested against having to use it, she learned at an early age to lift and buckle it, and to ride her father's horses.

Meantime her brothers grew to be men and bought out her father's two large farms. Her father purchased another farm of three hundred acres nearer the center of the town, a farm having upon it one of the forts used for security against the Indians by the original Huguenot settlers. She now became interested in history, and added that to her previous accomplishments.

At the age of eight, Clara Barton entered what was called high school, which involved boarding away from home. The arrangement met with only partial success on account of her extreme timidity:

During the preceding winter I began to hear talk of my going away to school, and it was decided that I be sent to Colonel Stone's High School, to board in his family and go home occasionally. This arrangement, I learned in later years, had a double object. I was what is known as a bashful child, timid in the presence of other persons, a condition of things found impossible to correct at home. In the hope of overcoming this undesirable *mauvais honte*, it was decided to throw me among strangers.

How well I remember my advent. My father took me in his carriage with a little dressing-case which I dignified with the appellation of "trunk" — something I had never owned. It was April — cold and bare. The house and schoolrooms adjoined, and seemed enormously large. The household was also large. The long family table with the dignified preceptor, my loved and feared teacher



of three years, at its head, seemed to me something formidable. There were probably one hundred and fifty pupils daily in the ample schoolrooms, of which I was perhaps the youngest, except the colonel's own children.

My studies were chosen with great care. I remember among them, ancient history with charts. The lessons were learned, to repeat by rote. I found difficulty both in learning the proper names and in pronouncing them, as I had not quite outgrown my lisp. One day I had studied very hard on the Ancient Kings of Egypt, and thought I had everything perfect, and when the pupil above me failed to give the name of a reigning king, I answered very promptly that it was "Potlomy." The colonel checked with a glance the rising laugh of the older members of the class, and told me, very gently, that the P was silent in that word. I had, however, seen it all, and was so overcome by mortification for my mistake, and gratitude for the kindness of my teacher, that I burst into tears and was permitted to leave the room.

I am not sure that I was really homesick, but the days seemed very long, especially Sundays. I was in constant dread of doing something wrong, and one Sunday afternoon I was sure I had found my occasion. It was early spring. The tender leaves had put out and with them the buds and half-open blossoms of the little cinnamon roses, an unfailing ornamentation of a well-kept New England home of that day. The children of the family had gathered in the front yard, admiring the roses and daring to pick each a little bouquet. As I stood holding mine, the heavy door at my back swung open, and there was the colonel, in his long, light dressing-gown and slippers, direct from his study. A kindly spoken, "Come with me, Clara," nearly took my last breath. I followed his strides through all the house, up the long flights of stairs, through the halls of the schoolrooms, silently wondering what I had done more than the others. I knew he was by no means wont to spare his own children.

I had my handful of roses — so had they. I knew it was very wrong to have picked them, but why more wrong for me than for the others? At length, and it seemed to me an hour, we reached the colonel's study, and there, advancing to meet us, was the Reverend Mr. Chandler, the pastor of our Universalist Church, whom I knew well. He greeted me very politely and kindly, and handed the large, open school reader which he held, to the colonel, who put it into my hands, placed me a little in front of them, and pointing to a column of blank verse, very gently directed me to read it. It was an extract from Campbell's "Pleasures of Hope," commencing, "Unfading hope, when life's last embers burn." I read it to the end, a page or two. When finished, the good pastor came quickly and relieved me of the heavy book, and I wondered why there were tears in his eyes. The colonel drew me to him, gently stroked my short cropped hair, went with me down the long steps, and told me I could "go back to the children and play." I went, much more easy in mind than I came, but it was years before I comprehended anything about it.

My studies gave me no trouble, but I grew very tired, felt hungry all the time, but dared not eat, grew thin and pale. The colonel noticed it, and watching me at table found that I was eating little or nothing, refusing everything that was offered me. Mistrusting that it was from timidity, he had food laid on my plate, but I dared not eat it, and finally at the end of the term a consultation was held between the colonel, my father, and our beloved family physician, Dr. Delano Pierce, who lived within a few doors of the school, and it was decided to take me home until a little older, and wiser, I could hope. My timid sensitiveness must have given great annoyance to my friends. If I ever could have gotten entirely over it, it would have given far less annoyance and trouble to myself all through life.

To this day, I would rather stand behind the lines of



artillery at Antietam, or cross the pontoon bridge under fire at Fredericksburg, than to be expected to preside at a public meeting.

Again Clara's instruction fell to her brothers and sisters. Stephen taught her mathematics, her sisters increased her knowledge of the common branches, and David continued to give her lessons in horsemanship. Stephen Barton, her father, was the owner of a fine black stallion, whose race of colts improved the blooded stock of Oxford and vicinity. When she was ten years old she received a present of a Morgan horse named Billy. Mounted on the back of this fine animal, she ranged the hills of Oxford completely free from that fear with which she was possessed in the schoolroom.

When she was thirteen years of age, her education took a new start under the instruction of Lucian Burleigh, who taught her grammar, composition, English literature, and history. A year later Jonathan Dana became her instructor, and taught her philosophy, chemistry, and writing. These two teachers she remembered with unfaltering affection.

While Clara Barton's brother Stephen taught school, his younger brother, David, gave himself to business. He, no less than Stephen, was remembered affectionately as having had an important share in her education. He had taught her to ride, and she had become his nurse. When he grew well and strong, he took the little girl under his instruction, and taught her how to do things directly and with expedition. If she started anywhere impulsively, and turned back, he reproved her. She was not to start until she knew where she was going, and why, and having started, she was to go ahead and accomplish

what she had undertaken. She was to learn the effective way of attaining results, and having learned it was to follow the method which promoted efficiency. He taught her to despise false motions, and to avoid awkward and ineffective attempts to accomplish results. He showed her how to drive a nail without splitting a board, and she never forgot how to handle the hammer and the saw. He taught her how to start a screw so it would drive straight. He taught her not to throw like a girl, but to hurl a ball or a stone with an under swing like a boy, and to hit what she threw at. He taught her to avoid "granny-knots" and how to tie square knots. All this practical instruction she learned to value as among the best features of her education.

One of her earliest experiences, in accomplishing a memorable piece of work with her own hands, came to her after her father had sold the two hill farms to his sons and removed to the farm on the highway nearer the village. It gave her her opportunity to learn the art of painting. This was more than the ability to dip a brush in a prepared mixture and spread the liquid evenly over a plane surface; it involved some knowledge of the art of preparing and mixing paints. She found joy in it at the time, and it quickened within her an aspiration to be an artist. In later years and as part of her education, she learned to draw and paint, and was able to give instruction in water-color and oil painting. It is interesting to read her own account of her first adventure into the field of art:

The hill farms — for there were two — were sold to my brothers, who, entering into partnership, constituted the well-known firm of S. & D. Barton, continuing mainly

through their lives. Thus I became the occupant of two homes, my sisters remaining with my brothers, none of whom were married.

The removal to the second home was a great novelty to me. I became observant of all changes made. One of the first things found necessary, on entering a house of such ancient date, was a rather extensive renovation, for those days, of painting and papering. The leading artisan in that line in the town was Mr. Sylvanus Harris, a courteous man of fine manners, good scholarly acquirements, and who, for nearly half a lifetime, filled the office of town clerk. The records of Oxford will bear his name and his beautiful handwriting as long as its records exist.

Mr. Harris was engaged to make the necessary improvements. Painting included more than in these later days of prepared material. The painter brought his massive white marble slab, ground his own paints, mixed his colors, boiled his oil, calcined his plaster, made his putty, and did scores of things that a painter of to-day would not only never think of doing, but would often scarcely know how to do.

Coming from the newly built house where I was born, I had seen nothing of this kind done, and was intensely interested. I must have persisted in making myself very numerous, for I was constantly reminded not to "get in the gentleman's way." But I was not to be set aside. My combined interest and curiosity for once overcame my timidity, and, encouraged by the mild, genial face of Mr. Harris, I gathered the courage to walk up in front and address him: "Will you teach me to paint, sir?" "With pleasure, little lady; if mamma is willing, I should very much like your assistance." The consent was forthcoming, and so was a gown suited to my new work, and I reported for duty. I question if any ordinary apprentice was ever more faithfully and intelligently instructed in his first month's apprenticeship. I was taught how to hold my brushes, to take care of them, allowed to help

grind my paints, shown how to mix and blend them, how to make putty and use it, to prepare oils and dryings, and learned from experience that boiling oil was a great deal hotter than boiling water, was taught to trim paper neatly, to match and help to hang it, to make the most approved paste, and even varnished the kitchen chairs to the entire satisfaction of my mother, which was triumph enough for one little girl. So interested was I, that I never wearied of my work for a day, and at the end of a month looked on sadly as the utensils, brushes, buckets and great marble slabs were taken away. There was not a room that I had not helped to make better; there were no longer mysteries in paint and paper. I knew them all, and that work would bring calluses even on little hands.

When the work was finished and everything gone, I went to my room, lonesome in spite of myself. I found on my candle stand a box containing a pretty little locket, neatly inscribed, "To a faithful worker." No one seemed to have any knowledge of it, and I never gained any.

One other memory of these early days must be recorded as having an immediate effect upon her, and a permanent influence upon her life. While she was still a little girl, she witnessed the killing of an ox, and it seemed so terrible a thing to her that it had much to do with her lifelong temperance in the matter of eating meat. She never became an absolute vegetarian. When she sat at a table where meat was served, and where a refusal to eat would have called for explanation, and perhaps would have embarrassed the family, she ate what was set before her as the Apostle Paul commanded, but she ate very sparingly of all animal food, and, when she was able to control her own diet, lived almost entirely on vegetables. Things that grew out of the ground, she said, were good enough for her:



A small herd of twenty-five fine milch cows came faithfully home each day with the lowering of the sun, for the milking and extra supper which they knew awaited them. With the customary greed of childhood, I had laid claim to three or four of the handsomest and tamest of them, and believing myself to be their real owner, I went faithfully every evening to the yards to receive and look after them. My little milk pail went as well, and I became proficient in an art never forgotten.

One afternoon, on going to the barn as usual, I found no cows there; all had been driven somewhere else. As I stood in the corner of the great yard alone, I saw three or four men — the farm hands — with one stranger among them wearing a long, loose shirt or gown. They were all trying to get a large red ox onto the barn floor, to which he went very reluctantly. At length they succeeded. One of the men carried an axe, and, stepping a little to the side and back, raised it high in the air and brought it down with a terrible blow. The ox fell, I fell too; and the next I knew I was in the house on a bed, and all the family about me, with the traditional camphor bottle, bathing my head to my great discomfort. As I regained consciousness, they asked me what made me fall? I said, "Some one struck me." "Oh, no," they said, "no one struck you." But I was not to be convinced, and proceeded to argue the case with an impatient putting away of the hurting hands, "Then what makes my head so sore?" Happy ignorance! I had not then learned the mystery of nerves.

I have, however, a very clear recollection of the indignation of my father (my mother had already expressed herself on the subject), on his return from town and hearing what had taken place. The hired men were lined up and arraigned for "cruel carelessness." They had "the consideration to keep the cattle away," he said, "but allowed that little girl to stand in full view." Of course, each protested he had not seen me. I was altogether too

friendly with the farm hands to hear them blamed, especially on my account, and came promptly to their side, assuring my father that they had not seen me, and that it was "no matter," I was "all well now." But, singularly, I lost all desire for meat, if I had ever had it — and all through life, to the present, have only eaten it when I must for the sake of appearance, or as circumstances seemed to make it the more proper thing to do. The bountiful ground has always yielded enough for all my needs and wants.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE DAYS OF HER YOUTH

So large a part of the schooling of Clara Barton was passed under the instruction of her own sisters and her brother Stephen that she ceased to feel in school the diffidence which elsewhere characterized her, and which she never fully overcame. Not all of her education, however, was accomplished in the schoolroom. While her mother refrained from giving to her actual instruction as she received from her father and brothers and sisters, her knowledge of domestic arts was not wholly neglected. When the family removed to the new home, her two brothers remained upon the more distant farm, and the older sisters kept house for them. Into the new home came the widow of her father's nephew, Jeremiah Larned, with her four children, whose ages varied from six to thirteen years. She now had playmates in her own household, with frequent visits to the old home where her two brothers and two sisters, none of them married, kept house together. Although her mother still had older kitchen help, she taught Clara some of the mysteries of cooking. Her mother complained somewhat that she never really had a fair chance at Clara's instruction as a housekeeper, but Clara believed that no instruction of her youth was more lasting or valuable than that which enabled her, on the battle-field or elsewhere, to make a pie, "crinkly around the edges, with marks of finger-prints," to remind a soldier of home.

Two notable interruptions of her schooling occurred.

The first was caused by an alarming illness when she was five years of age. Dysentery and convulsions came very near to robbing Captain and Mrs. Barton of their baby. Of this almost mortal illness, she preserved only one memory, that of the first meal which she ate when her convalescence set in. She was propped up in a huge cradle that had been constructed for an adult invalid, with a little low table at the side. The meal consisted of a piece of brown bread crust about two inches square, a tiny glass of homemade blackberry cordial, and a wee bit of her mother's well-cured cheese. She dropped asleep from exhaustion as she finished this first meal, and the memory of it made her mouth water as long as she lived.

The other interruption occurred when she was eleven. Her brother David, who was a dare-devil rider and fearless climber, ascended to the ridge-pole on the occasion of a barn-raising. A board broke under his feet, and he fell to the ground. He fell upon solid timbers and sustained a serious injury, especially by a blow on the head. For two years he was an invalid. For a time he hung between life and death, and then was "a sleepless, nervous, cold dyspeptic, and a mere wreck of his former self." After two years of suffering, he completely recovered under a new system of steam baths; but those two years did not find Clara in the schoolroom. She nursed her brother with such assiduity as almost permanently to injure her own health. In his nervous condition he clung to her, and she acquired something of that skill in the care of the sick which remained with her through life.

Clara Barton was growing normally in her twelfth year when she became her brother's nurse. Not until that long vigil was completed was it discovered that she

had ceased to grow. Her height in her shoes, with moderately high heels, was five feet and three inches, and was never increased. In later life people who met her gave widely divergent reports of her stature. She was described as "of medium height," and now and then she was declared to be tall. She had a remarkable way of appearing taller than she was. As a matter of fact in her later years, her height shrank a little, and she measured in her stocking-feet exactly sixty inches.

Clara was an ambitious child. Her two brothers owned a cloth-mill where they wove satinet. She was ambitious to learn the art of weaving. Her mother at first objected, but her brother Stephen pleaded for her, and she was permitted to enter the mill. She was not tall enough to tend the loom, so a raised platform was arranged for her between a pair of looms and she learned to manage the shuttle. To her great disappointment, the mill burned down when she had been at work only two weeks; but this brief vacational experience served as a basis of a pretty piece of fiction at which she always smiled, but which annoyed her somewhat — that she had entered a factory and earned money to pay off a mortgage on her father's farm. The length of her service in the mill would not have paid a very large mortgage, but fortunately there was no mortgage to pay off. Her father was a prosperous man for his time, and the family was well to do, possessing not only broad acres, but adding to the family income by manufacture and trade. They were among the most enterprising, prosperous, and respected families in a thrifty and self-respecting community.

One of the enterprises on the Barton farm afforded

her great joy. The narrow French River ran through her father's farm. In places it could be crossed by a foot-log, and there were few days when she did not cross and recross it for the sheer joy of finding herself on a trembling log suspended over a deep stream. This river ran the only sawmill in the neighborhood. Here she delighted to ride the carriage which conveyed the logs to the old-fashioned up-and-down saw. The carriage moved very slowly when it was going forward and the saw was eating its laborious way through the log, but it came back with violent rapidity, and the little girl, who remembered nothing but fear of her earliest childhood, was happy when she flaunted her courage in the face of her natural timidity and rode the sawmill carriage as she rode her high-stepping blooded Billy.

She went to church every Sunday, and churches in that day had no fires. Her people had been brought up in the orthodox church, but, revolting at the harsh dogmatism of the orthodox theology of that day, they withdrew and became founders of the first Universalist Church in America. The meeting-house at Oxford, built for the Universalist Society, is the oldest building in existence erected for this communion. Hosea Ballou was the first minister — a brave, strong, resolute man. Though the family liberalized their creed, they did not greatly modify the austerity of their Puritan living. They kept the Sabbath about as strictly as they had been accustomed to do before their break with the Puritan church.

Once in her childhood Clara broke the Sabbath, and it brought a painful memory:

One clear, cold, starlight Sunday morning, I heard a low whistle under my open chamber window. I realized



that the boys were out for a skate and wanted to communicate with me. On going to the window, they informed me that they had an extra pair of skates and if I could come out they would put them on me and "learn" me how to skate. It was Sunday morning; no one would be up till late, and the ice was so smooth and "glare." The stars were bright; the temptation was too great. I was in my dress in a moment and out. The skates were fastened on firmly, one of the boy's wool neck "comforters" tied about my waist, to be held by the boy in front. The other two were to stand on either side, and at a signal the cavalcade started. Swifter and swifter we went, until at length we reached a spot where the ice had been cracked and was full of sharp edges. These threw me, and the speed with which we were progressing, and the distance before we could quite come to a stop, gave terrific opportunity for cuts and wounded knees. The opportunity was not lost. There was more blood flowing than any of us had ever seen. Something must be done. Now all of the wool neck comforters came into requisition; my wounds were bound up, and I was helped into the house, with one knee of ordinary respectable cuts and bruises; the other frightful. Then the enormity of the transaction and its attendant difficulties began to present themselves, and how to surround (for there was no possibility of overcoming) them was the question.

The most feasible way seemed to be to say nothing about it, and we decided to all keep silent; but how to conceal the limp? I must have no limp, but walk well. I managed breakfast without notice. Dinner not quite so well, and I had to acknowledge that I had slipped down and hurt my knee a little. This gave my limp more latitude, but the next day it was so decided, that I was held up and searched. It happened that the best knee was inspected; the stiff wool comforter soaked off, and a suitable dressing given it. This was a great relief, as it

afforded pretext for my limp, no one observing that I limped with the wrong knee.

But the other knee was not a wound to heal by first intention, especially under its peculiar dressing, and finally had to be revealed. The result was a surgical dressing and my foot held up in a chair for three weeks, during which time I read the Arabian Nights from end to end. As the first dressing was finished, I heard the surgeon say to my father: "That was a hard case, Captain, but she stood it like a soldier." But when I saw how genuinely they all pitied, and how tenderly they nursed me, even walking lightly about the house not to jar my swollen and fevered limbs, in spite of my disobedience and detestable deception (and persevered in at that), my Sabbath-breaking and unbecoming conduct, and all the trouble I had caused, conscience revived, and my mental suffering far exceeded my physical. The Arabian Nights were none too powerful a soporific to hold me in reasonable bounds. I despised myself, and failed to sleep or eat.

My mother, perceiving my remorseful condition, came to the rescue, telling me soothingly, that she did not think it the worst thing that could have been done, that other little girls had probably done as badly, and strengthened her conclusions by telling me how she once persisted in riding a high-mettled, unbroken horse in opposition to her father's commands, and was thrown. My supposition is that she had been a worthy mother of her equestrian son.

The lesson was not lost on any of the group. It is very certain that none of us, boys or girls, indulged in further smart tricks. Twenty-five years later, when on a visit to the old home, long left, I saw my father, then a gray-haired grandsire, out on the same little pond, fitting the skates carefully to the feet of his little twin granddaughters, holding them up to make their first start in safety, I remembered my wounded knees, and blessed the great



Father that progress and change were among the possibilities of His people.

I never learned to skate. When it became fashionable I had neither time nor opportunity.

Another disappointment of her childhood remained with her. She wanted to learn to dance, and was not permitted to do so. It was not because her parents were wholly opposed to dancing, but chiefly because the dancing-school was organized while a revival of religion was in progress in the village, and her parents felt that her attendance at dancing-school at such a time would be unseemly. Of this she wrote:

I recall another disappointment which, though not vital, was still indicative of the times. During the following winter a dancing-school was opened in the hall of the one hotel on Oxford Plain, some three miles from us. It was taught by a personal friend of my father, a polished gentleman, resident of a neighboring town, and teacher of English schools. By some chance I got a glimpse of the dancing-school at the opening, and was seized with a most intense desire to go and learn to dance. With my peculiar characteristics it was necessary for me to want a thing very much before mentioning it; but this overcame me, especially as the cordial teacher took tea with us one evening before going to his school, and spoke very interestingly of his classes. I even went so far as to beg permission to go. The dance was in my very feet. The violin haunted me. "Ladies change" and "All hands round" sounded in my ears and woke me from my sleep at night.

The matter was taken up in family council. I was thought to be very young to be allowed to go to a dancing-school in a hotel. Dancing at that time was at a very low ebb in good New England society, and, besides, there was an active revival taking place in both of the orthodox

churches (or, rather, one a church and the other a society without a church), and it might not be a wise, nor even a courteous, thing to allow. Not that our family, with its well-known liberal proclivities, could have the slightest objection on that score; still, like Saint Paul, if meat were harmful to their brethren, they would not eat it, and thus it was decided that I could not go. The decision was perfectly conscientious, kindness itself, and probably wise; but I have wondered, if they could have known (as they never did) how severe the disappointment was, the tears it cost me in my little bed in the dark, the music and the master's voice still sounding in my ears, if this knowledge would have weighed in the decision.

I have listened to a great deal of music since then, interspersed with very positive orders, and which generally called for "All hands round," but the dulcet notes of the violin and the "Ladies change" were missing. Neither did I ever learn to dance.

As she looked back over her childhood, she was unable to recall many social events which could have been characterized as thrilling. By invitation she once wrote out for a gathering of women her recollection of a party which she attended on election day just after she was ten years old. It is worth reading, and may well remind us that happy childhood memories do not always gather about events which seem to be intrinsically great:

#### A CHILD'S PARTY

It is the "reminiscence of a happy moment" which my beloved friends of the Legion of Loyal Women ask of me — some moment or event so happy as to be worth the telling. That may not be an easy thing in a life like mine, but there are few things the "Legion" could ask of me that I would not at least try to do. But, dear sisters, I fear I must ask of you patiently to travel far back with

me to the little childhood days which knew no care. Patiently, I say, for that was long ago.

I lived in the country, a mile or more from the village. Olivia Bruce, my favorite friend, lived in the village.

Olivia had "made a party," and invited twelve little girls, schoolmates and playmates, herself making the thirteenth (we had never learned that there could be bad luck in numbers).

It was May, and the party was to be held on "Old Election Day." Care and thought were given to the occasion.

Each guest was to learn a little poem to recite for the first time, as a surprise to the others.

There was some effort at costume. We were all to wear aprons alike, from the village store — white, with a pretty vine, and cozy, little, brown birds in the corners. Embroidered? Oh, no! just stamped; but what embroidery has since ever borne comparison with that?

Our ages must conform — no one under ten, or over twelve. How glad I was that I had been ten the Christmas before!

At length arrangements were completed, and nothing to be wished for but a pleasant day.

The morning came, heavy and dark. The thunder rolled, the clouds gathered and broke, and the lightning as if in cruel mockery darted in and out among them, lighting up their ragged edges, or enveloping the whole mass in quivering flame. The rain came down in torrents, and I fear there were torrents of tears as well. Who could give comfort in a disappointment and grief like that? Who, but old Morgan, the gardener, with his poetic prophecy —

"Rain before seven, be clear before 'leven."

I watched the clouds, I watched the clock, but most of all I watched the hopeful face of old Morgan. How long and how dark the morning was! At length, as the clock pointed half-past ten, the clouds broke again, but this

time with the bright, clear sun behind them, and the high arching rainbow resting on the tree-tops of the western woods.

It was long to wait, even for dinner, and the proper time to go. Finally, all traces of tears were washed away, the toilet made even to the apron and hat, the mother's kiss given upon the cheek of her restless child with the gentle admonition "Be a good girl!" and, as I sprang from the doorstep striving hard to keep at least one foot on the ground, who shall say that the happiness and joy of that little bit of humanity was not as complete as ever falls to the lot of humanity to be?

The party was a success. The thirteen little girls were there; each wore her pretty apron and the knot of ribbon in her hair; each recited her little poem unknown to the others.

We danced — played ring plays.

"The needle's eye that can supply  
The thread that runs so truly."

"For no man knows  
Where oats, peas, beans, or barley grows."

We "chased the squirrel," "hunted the slipper," trimmed our hats with wild flowers and stood in awe before the great waterwheel of the busy mill.

At five o'clock a pretty tea was served for us, and dark-eyed Olivia presided with the grace and gravity of a matron; and, as the sun was sinking behind the western hills, we bade good-bye, and each sped away to the home awaiting her, I to be met by a mother's approving kiss, for I had been "a good girl," and gladly sought the little bed, and the long night of unbroken sleep that only a child may know.

Long, long years ago the watchful mother went to that other world; one after another the guests of the little party followed her — some in girlhood, some in young womanhood, some in weary widowhood. One by one,



I believe, she has met and welcomed them — welcomed each of the twelve, and waits

CLARA BARTON

Another formative influence which must not be overlooked was that of phrenology. This now discredited science had great influence in the early part of the nineteenth century. Certain men, among whom the Fowler brothers were most conspicuous, professed to be able to read character and to portray mental aptitude by a tactual examination of the head. The perceptive faculties, according to this theory, were located in the front part of the brain, the moral faculties in the top of it, and the faculties that governed the animal nature in the back. They professed to be able by feeling over the "bumps" or "organs of the brain," to discover what vocation a person was good for and what undesirable tendencies he ought to guard against. The mother of Clara Barton was greatly troubled by the abnormal sensitiveness of this little child. She asked L. W. Fowler, who was then staying at the Barton home, what this little girl ought to do in life. Mr. Fowler answered: "The sensitive nature will always remain. She will never assert herself for herself; she will suffer wrong first. But for others she will be perfectly fearless. Throw responsibility upon her."

He advised that she should become a school-teacher. School-teaching scarcely seemed a suitable vocation for a child of so shrinking a nature. Clara was fifteen at the time, and still diffident. She was lying in bed with the mumps, and overheard her mother's question and the answer. Her mother was impressed by it, and so was Clara. Years afterward she looked back upon that experience as the turning-point in her life. Long after she

had ceased to have very much faith in phrenology, she blessed the day that sent a phrenologist into her home. When asked in later years what book had influenced her most, she wrote the following reply:

THE BOOK WHICH HAS MOST INFLUENCED ME

Superlatives are difficult to deal with, the comparative is always so near.

That which interests most, may influence little. Most books interest in a greater or less degree, and possibly have a temporary influence. The yellow-covered literature which the boy from twelve to sixteen reads, surely interests him, and only too often creates an involuntary influence, the results of which mark his entire life. He adopts methods and follows courses which he otherwise would not have done, and reaps misfortune for a harvest.

And so with the girl of like age who pores and weeps over some tender, unwholesome, love-lorn picture of impossible personages, until they become real to her, and, while she can never personate them, they stand in the way of so much which she really does need, it may well be said that the results influence her entire life.

Not alone the character of what is read, but the period in life of the reader, may and will have much to do with the potency of results. The little girl who is so fortunate as to clasp her child fingers around a copy of "Little Women," or "Little Men" (Bless the memory of my friend and co-worker Louisa M. Alcott!), is in small danger from the effects of the literature she may afterwards meet. Her tastes are formed for wholesome food.

And the boy! Ah, well; it will require a great deal of prodding to curb and root the wild grass out of his nature! But what a splendid growth he makes, once it is done!

All of these conditions of character, circumstances, and time may be said to have found place in the solution of the little problem now before me; viz: "What book most influenced me?" If it had read "interested" rather



than "influenced," I should have made a wide range — "The Fables of Æsop," "Pilgrim's Progress," "Arabian Nights," "The Ballads of Scott," "The Benign Old Vicar," "The Citizens of the World," and mainly the mass of choice old English classics — for who can select? — The glorious "Idylls of the King." In fancy I should have sat at the round table with Arthur's knights, searched for the Holy Grail with Sir Galahad, roamed Africa with Livingstone and Stanley, breakfasted with the Autocrat, and dropped the gathering tear for the loved Quaker poet, so dear to us all.

How grateful I am for all this; and to these writers immortal! How they have sweetened life! But they really changed no course, formed no character, opened no doors, "influenced" nothing.

In a little children's booklet I have explained my own nature — timid, sensitive, bashful to awkwardness — and that at this period of a dozen years or so I chanced to make the acquaintance of L. W. Fowler, of the "Fowler Brothers," the earliest, and then only, exponents of Phrenology in the country.

I had at that time read much of the literatures above cited which then existed. Mr. Fowler placed in my hands their well-written book and brochures on Phrenology, "The Science of the Mind." This carried me to another class of writers, Spurzheim, and Combe — "The Constitution of Man." These became my exemplars and "Know thyself" became my text and my study. A long life has passed, and so have they, but their influence has remained. In every walk of life it has gone with me. It has enabled me to better comprehend the seeming mysteries about me; the course of those with whom I had to deal, or come in contact; not by the studying of their thoughts, or intentions, for I abhor the practice of reading one's friends; but to enable me to excuse, without offense, many acts which I could in no other way have accounted for. It has enabled me to see, not only that,

but why it was their nature, and could not be changed. They "could no other, so help them God." It has enriched my field of charitable judgment; enlarged my powers of forgiveness, made those things plain that would have been obscure to me, easy, that would have been hard, and sometimes made possible to endure, without complaint, that which might otherwise have proved unendurable. "Know thyself" has taught me in any great crisis to put myself under my own feet; bury enmity, cast ambition to the winds, ignore complaint, despise retaliation, and stand erect in the consciousness of those higher qualities that made for the good of human kind, even though we may not clearly see the way.

"I know not where His Islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care."

Even though phrenology be now regarded as a scientific error, it must not be supposed that all the men who practiced it were conscious charletans, or that all who believed in it were ignorant dupes. It was in its day what popularized psychology has become in the present day. Apart from the exploded idea that the brain contains separate "organs" which act more or less independently in the development and manifestation of character, it dealt with the study of the human mind in more nearly practical fashion than anything which up to that time had become popularly available. The phrenologist would now be called a psychologist, and would make no pretense of reading character by manipulating the skull. But some of those men taught people to consider their own mental possibilities, and to determine to realize all that was potentially best within them. This was the effect of phrenology upon Clara Barton.

## CHAPTER VII

### HER FIRST EXPERIENCE AS A TEACHER

THE avenues which open into life are many now, and the feet of young people who leave home or school are set at the intersection of many highways. But it was not so in the early part of the nineteenth century. For those who had aspirations for something else than the farm or shop, the most common and convenient path to larger knowledge and a professional career lay through the teaching of the district school. When Mr. Fowler advised that responsibility be laid upon Clara to develop her self-reliance and overcome her shyness, there were not many kinds of work which could easily have been recommended. School-teaching followed almost inevitably, and as something foreordained. She belonged to a generation of teachers, and to a family which was quite at home in the schoolroom. Her elder sister Dorothy developed symptoms of invalidism, never married, and in time had to give up teaching, and her younger sister Sally married and became Mrs. Vassall. Her brother Stephen had graduated from the work of teaching, and he and David were associated in farm, gristmill, sawmill, cloth-mill, and other enterprises. There was no difficulty in securing for Clara the opportunity to teach in the district where her married sister lived. Bearing in mind the advice of Mr. Fowler, she did up her hair, lengthened her skirts, and prepared for her first work as a teacher.

At the close of the second term of school, the advice was acted upon, and it was arranged that I teach

the school in District No. 9. My sister resided within the district. How well I remember the preparations — the efforts to look larger and older, the examination by the learned committee of one clergyman, one lawyer, and one justice of the peace; the certificate with “excellent” added at the close; the bright May morning over the dewy, grassy road to the schoolhouse, neither large nor new, and not a pupil in sight.

On entering, I found my little school of forty pupils all seated according to their own selection, quietly waiting with folded hands. Bright, rosy-cheeked boys and girls from four to thirteen, with the exception of four lads, as tall and nearly as old as myself. These four boys naturally looked a little curiously at me, as if forming an opinion of how best to dispose of me, as rumor had it that on the preceding summer, not being *en rapport* with the young lady teacher, they had excluded her from the building and taken possession themselves. All arose as I entered, and remained standing until requested to sit. Never having observed how schools were opened, I was compelled, as one would say, to “blaze my own way.” I was too timid to address them, but holding my Bible, I said they might take their Testaments and turn to the Sermon on the Mount. All who could read, read a verse each, I reading with them in turn. This opened the way for remarks upon the meaning of what they had read. I found them more ready to express themselves than I had expected, which was helpful to me as well. I asked them what they supposed the Saviour meant by saying that they must love their enemies and do good to them that hated and misused them? This was a hard question, and they hesitated, until at length a little bright-eyed girl with great earnestness replied: “I think He meant that you must be good to everybody, and must n’t quarrel or make nobody feel bad, and I’m going to try.” An ominous smile crept over the rather hard faces of my four lads, but my response was so prompt, and my approval so



hearty, that it disappeared and they listened attentively, but ventured no remarks. With this moderate beginning the day progressed, and night found us social, friendly, and classed for a school. Country schools did not admit of home dinners. I also remained. On the second or third day an accident on their outside field of rough play called me to them. They had been playing unfairly and dangerously and needed teaching, even to play well. I must have thought they required object lessons, for almost imperceptibly, either to them or to myself, I joined in the game and was playing with them.

My four lads soon perceived that I was no stranger to their sports or their tricks; that my early education had not been neglected, and that they were not the first boys I had seen. When they found that I was as agile and as strong as themselves, that my throw was as sure and as straight as theirs, and that if they won a game it was because I permitted it, their respect knew no bounds. No courtesy within their knowledge was neglected. Their example was sufficient for the entire school. I have seen no finer type of boys. They were faithful to me in their boyhood, and in their manhood faithful to their country. Their blood crimsoned its hardest fields, and the little bright-eyed girl with the good resolve has made her whole life a blessing to others, and still lives to follow the teaching given her. Little Emily has "made nobody feel bad."

My school was continued beyond the customary length of time, and its only hard feature was our parting. In memory I see that pitiful group of children sobbing their way down the hill after the last good-bye was said, and I was little better. We had all been children together, and when, in accordance with the then custom at town meetings, the grades of the schools were named and No. 9 stood first for discipline, I thought it the greatest injustice, and remonstrated, affirming that there had been no discipline, that not one scholar had ever been disciplined.





CLARA BARTON AT EIGHTEEN



Child that I was, I did not know that the surest test of discipline is its absence.

Clara Barton was now embarked upon what seemed likely to be a life vocation. Her success in teaching was marked, and her reputation increased year by year. For twenty years the schoolroom was her home. She taught in district schools near Oxford, and established a school of her own, which she conducted for ten years. Then she stopped teaching for a time, in order to complete her own education, as completion then was accepted and understood. She did a memorable piece of school work in Bordentown, New Jersey, and, but for the failure of her voice, might have continued a teacher to the end of her life.

Her experiences during the years when she was teaching and pursuing further studies were recorded by her in 1908, in a manuscript which has never been published. She had already written and printed a little book entitled "The Story of my Childhood," which was well received and brought her many expressions of pleasure from its readers. She thought of continuing her autobiography in sections, and publishing these separately. She hoped then to revise and unify them, supplement them with adequate references to her record, and make a complete biography. But she got no farther than the second installment, which must appear as a chapter in this present work.

Before turning to this narrative which marks the beginning of her life away from the parental roof, we may listen to the story of her first journey away from home. It occurred at the end of her first term of school, when her brother David set out on a journey to the State of

Maine to bring home his bride, and asked her to accompany him.

One day, early in September, my brother David, now one of the active, popular business men of the town, nearly took my breath away by inviting me to accompany him on a journey to the State of Maine, to be present at his wedding and with him bring back the wife who was to grace his home and share his future life.

There was now more lengthening of skirts, and a rush of dressmaking such as I had never known before; and when, two weeks later, I found myself with my brother and a rather gay party of ladies and gentlemen, friends of his, at one of the most elegant hotels in Boston (where I had never been), waiting the arrival of a delayed steamer, I was so overcome by the dread of committing some impropriety or indiscretion which might embarrass my brother that I begged him to permit me to go back home. I was not distressed about what might be thought of *me*. I did not seem to care much about that; but how it might reflect upon my brother, and the mortification that my awkwardness could not fail to inflict on him.

I had never set foot on a vessel or seagoing craft of any kind, and when, in the glitter of that finely equipped steamer, I really crossed over a corner of the great Atlantic Ocean, the very waves of which touched other continents as well, I felt that my world was miraculously widening.

It was another merry party, and magnificent spans of horses that met and galloped away with us over the country to our destination.

But the crowning astonishment came when I was informed that it was the desire and decision of all parties, that I act as bridesmaid; that I assist in introducing the younger of the guests, and stand beside the tall, handsome young bride who was to be my sister, while she pledged her troth to the brother dearer to me than my own life.

This responsibility seemed to throw the whole world wide open to me. How well I remember the tearful resolution with which I pledged myself to try to overcome my troublesome propensities and to strive only for the courage of the right, and for the fearlessness of true womanhood so much needed and earnestly desired, and so painfully lacking.

November found us home again. Under the circumstances, there must naturally be a share of social gayeties during the winter, and some preparations for my new school duties; and I waited with more or less apprehension for what would be my first life among strangers, and the coming of my anticipated "First of May." With slight variation I could have joined truthfully in the dear old child refrain:

"Then wake and call me early,  
Call me early, mother dear,"  
For that will be the veriest day  
"Of all the glad New Year."



## CHAPTER VIII

### LEAVES FROM HER UNPUBLISHED AUTOBIOGRAPHY

WHEN Clara Barton began to teach school, she was only a little girl. To her family, she seemed even younger and more tiny than she was. But she had taken the words of Dr. Fowler to heart, and she determined to teach and to teach successfully. Mrs. Stafford, formerly Mamie Barton, remembers hearing her mother tell how seriously Clara took the edict of the phrenologist. To her it was nothing less than predestination and prophecy. In her own mind she was already a teacher, but she realized that in the mind of her household she was still a child. She stood beside the large stone fireplace, looking very slender and very small, and with dignity asked, "But what am I to do with only two little old waifish dresses?"

Julia, David Barton's young bride, was first to discern the pertinence of the question. If Clara was to teach school, she must have apparel suitable for her vocation. The "two little old waifish dresses," which had been deemed adequate for her home and school life, were replaced by new frocks that fell below her shoe-tops, and Clara Barton began her work.

She was a quick-tempered little teacher, dignified and self-possessed. Little and young though she was, she was not to be trifled with. She flogged, and on occasion expelled, but she won respect at the outset and very soon affection. Then floggings ceased almost altogether.

At first she was teacher only of the spring and autumn

school nearest her home; then she taught in districts in Oxford farther away; then came the incontrovertible certificate of success in her invitation to teach the winter school, which according to precedent must be managed by a man capable of whipping the entire group of big boys. And in all this experience of teaching she succeeded.

In 1908 she wrote the second installment of her autobiography, and in that she related how she finished her teaching in Oxford and went for further education to Clinton Institute:

Hard, tiresome years were these, with no advancement for me. Some, I hoped, for others. Little children grew to be large, and mainly "well behaved." Boys grew to manhood, and continued faithfully in their work, or went out and entered into business, seeking other vocations. A few girls became teachers, but more continued at their looms or set up housekeeping for themselves, but whatever sphere opened to them, they were all mine, second only to the claims and interests of the real mother. And so they have remained. Scattered over the world, some near, some far, I have been their confidant, standing at their nuptials if possible, lent my name to their babies, followed their fortunes to war's gory fields, staunched their blood, dressed their wounds, and closed their Northern eyes on the hard-fought fields of the Southland; and yet, all this I count as little in comparison with the faithful, grateful love I hold to-day of the few survivors of my Oxford schools.

I shall have neglected a great, I could almost say a holy, duty, if I fail to mention the name, and connect the presence, of the Reverend Horatio Bardwell with this school. Reverend Dr. Bardwell, an early India missionary, and for over twenty years pastor of the Congregational Church of Oxford, where his memory lovingly

lingers to-day, as if he had passed from them but yesterday, or indeed had not passed at all.

Dr. Bardwell was continuously on the School Board of the town, and his custom was to drop in upon a school, familiarly, at a most unexpected moment. I recall the amusing scenes, when, by some unusual sound behind me, my attention would be called from the class I had before me, to see my entire school, which had risen unbidden, standing with hands resting on the desk before them, heads reverently bent, and Dr. Bardwell midway of the open door, with hands upraised in mute wonder and admiration. At length he would find voice, with, "What a sight, what a multitude!" The school reseated itself when bidden and prepared for the visit of a half-hour of pleasant conversation, anecdotes, and advice that even the smallest would not willingly have missed. It was the self-reliant, self-possessed, and unbidden courtesy of these promiscuous children that won the Doctor's admiration. He saw in these something for a future to build upon.

It is to be remembered that I am not writing romance, nor yet ancient history, where I can create or vary my models to suit myself. It is, in fact, semi-present history, with most notable characters still existing, who can, at any moment, rise up and call me to order. To avoid such a contingency, I may sometimes be more explicit than I otherwise would be at the risk of prolixity. This possibility leads me to state that a few times in the years I was borrowed, for a part of a winter term, by some neighboring town, where it would be said there was trouble, and some school was "not getting on well." I usually found that report to have been largely illusive, for they got on very well with me. Probably it was the old adage of a "new broom," for I did nothing but teach them. I recall one of these experiences as transpiring in Millbury, the grand old town where the lamented and honored mother of our President-elect Judge Taft has just passed

to a better land. That early and undeserved reputation for "discipline" always clung to me.

Most of this transpired during years in which I should have been in school myself, using time and opportunities for my own advancement which could not be replaced. This thought grew irresistibly upon me, until I decided that I must withdraw and find a school, the object of which should be to teach *me* something. The number of educational institutions for women was one to a thousand as compared with to-day. I knew I must place myself so far away that a "run of bad luck" in the home school could not persuade me to return — it would be sure to have one.

Religiously, I had been educated in the liberal thought of my family, and preferring to remain in that atmosphere, I decided upon the "Liberal Institute," of Clinton, New York.

I recall with pain even now the regret with which my family, especially my brothers, heard my announcement. I had become literally a part, if not a partner, of them in school and office. My brother Stephen was school superintendent, thus there was no necessity for making my intentions public, and I would spare both my school and myself the pain of parting. I closed my autumn term, as usual, on Friday night. On Monday night the jingling cutter of my brothers (for it was early sleighing), took me to the station for New York. This was in reality going away from home. I had left the smothered sighs, the blessings, and the memories of a little life behind me. My journey was made in silence and safety, and the third day found me installed as a guest in the "Clinton House" of Clinton, Oneida County, New York—a typical old-time tavern. My hosts were Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Bertram—and again the hand rests, and memory pauses, to pay its tribute of grateful, loving respect to such as I shall never know again this side the Gates Eternal.

It was holiday season. The Institute was undergoing



a transfer from old to new buildings. These changes caused a delay of some weeks, while I became a part and parcel of the family I had so incidentally and fortunately fallen among.

Clinton was also the seat of Hamilton College. The sisters and relatives of the students of Hamilton contributed largely to the personnel of the Institute. Reverend Dr. Sawyer presided over Hamilton, and Miss Louise Barker with a competent corps of assistants presided over the Institute.

It was a cold, blustering winter day that assembled us in the almost as cold schoolrooms of the newly finished and sparsely furnished building. Even its clean new brick walls on its stately eminence looked cold, and the two-plank walk with a two-foot space between, leading up from town, was not suggestive of the warmest degree of sociability, to say the least of it. My introduction to our Preceptress, or President, Miss Barker, was both a pleasure and a surprise to me. I found an unlooked-for activity, a cordiality, and an irresistible charm of manner that none could have foreseen — a winning, indescribable grace which I have met in only a few persons in a whole lifetime. Those who remember the eminent Dr. Lucy Hall Brown, of Brooklyn, who only a year ago passed out through California's "Golden Gate," will be able to catch something of what I mean, but cannot describe. Neither could they. To no one had I mentioned anything of myself, or my past. No "certificate of character" had been mentioned, and no recommendation from my "last place" been required of me. There was no reason why I should volunteer my history, or step in among that crowd of eager pupils as a "school-marm," expected to know everything.

The easiest way for me was to keep silent, as I did, and so well kept that I left that Institute at the close without a mistrust on the part of any one that I had ever taught school a day.



The difficulty to be met lay mainly in the assignment of studies. The prescribed number was a cruel limit. I was there for study. I required no rudiments, and wanted no allowance for waste time; I would use it all; and diffidently I made this fact known at the head, asking one more and one more study until the limit was stretched out of all reasonable proportions. I recall, with amusement, the last evening when I entered with my request. The teachers were assembled in the parlor and, divining my errand, as I had never any other, Miss Barker broke into a merry laugh — with “Miss Barton, we have a few studies left; you had better take what there are, and we will say nothing about it.” This broke the ice, and the line. I could only join in the laugh, and after this studied what I would, and “nothing was said.”

I would by no means be understood as crediting myself with superior scholarship. There were doubtless far more advanced scholars there than I, but I had a drilled rudimentary knowledge which they had never had, and I had the habit of study, with a burning anxiety to make the most of lost time. So true it is that we value our privileges only when we have lost them.

Miss Barton spent her vacations at the Institute. A few teachers were there, and a small group of students; and she pursued her studies and gave her reading wider range. She wanted to go home, but the distance seemed great, and she was there to learn.

Her mother died while she was at Clinton. Her death occurred in July, but before the term had ended. Clara could not reach home in time for the funeral and her family knew it and sent her word not to undertake the journey.

She finished her school year and her course, made a visit to her home, and then journeyed to Bordentown,

New Jersey, to visit her friends, the Norton family. There the opportunity came to her of teaching the winter term of the Bordentown school.

"Public schools of that day," she wrote, "ceased with the southern boundary of New England and New York. Each pupil was assessed a certain fee, the aggregate of which formed the teacher's salary."

She undertook the school on the fee basis, but in a short time changed it to a public school, open to all the children of school age in Bordentown. It was that town's first free school. The School Board agreed to give her the opportunity to try the experiment. She tells how it came about. She looked over the little group who attended her subscription school, and then saw the much larger number outside, and she was not happy:

But the boys! I found them on all sides of me. Every street corner had little knots of them idle, listless, as if to say, what shall one do, when one has nothing to do? I sought every inconspicuous occasion to stop and talk with them. I saw nothing unusual in them. Much like other boys I had known, unusually courteous, showing special instruction in that line, and frequently of unusual intelligence. They spoke of their banishment or absence from school with far less of bravado or boasting than would have been expected, under the circumstances, and often with regret. "Lady, there is no school for us," answered a bright-faced lad of fourteen, as he rested his foot on the edge of a little park fountain where I had accosted him. "We would be glad to go if there was one." I had listened to such as this long enough, and, without returning to my hotel, I sought Mr. Suydam, as chairman of the School Committee, and asked for an interview.

By this time, in his capacity of postmaster, we had formed a tolerable acquaintance. Now, for the first time,

I made known my desire to open a public school in Bordentown, teaching it myself.

Surprise, discouragement, resistance, and sympathy were all pictured on his manly face. He was troubled for terms in which to express the mental conflict, but in snatches something like this.

These boys were renegades, many of them more fit for the penitentiary than school — a woman could do nothing with them. They would n't go to school if they had the chance, and the parents would never send them to a "pauper school." I would have the respectable sentiment of the entire community against me; I could never endure the obloquy, not to call it disgrace that I should meet; and to crown all, I should have the bitter opposition of all the present teachers, many of whom were ladies of influence in society and would contend vigorously for their rights. A strong man would quail and give way under what he would be compelled to meet, and what could a woman — a young woman, and a stranger — do?

He spoke very kindly and appreciatingly of the intention, acknowledging the necessity, and commending the nature of the effort, but it was ill-timed, and had best be at once abandoned as impracticable.

With this honest effort, and, wiping the perspiration from his forehead, he rested. After a moment's quiet and seeing that he did not resume, I said with a respect, which I most sincerely felt, "Thank you, Mr. Suydam, shall I speak?" "Certainly, Miss Barton," and with a little appreciative laugh, "I will try to be as good a listener as you have been."

I thanked him again for the evident sincerity of his objections, assuring him that I believed them drawn entirely in my interest, and his earnest desire to save me from what seemed to him an impossible undertaking, with only failure and humiliation as sure and logical results. A few of these I would like to answer, and

throwing off the mask I had worn since Clinton, told him plainly that I was, and had been for years, a teacher of the public schools of New England. That was my profession, and that, if entered in the long and honored competitive list of such, I did not suppose that in either capacity, experience, or success I should stand at the foot. I had studied the character of these boys, and had intense pity for, but no fear of, them. As for exclusion from society, I had not sought society, and could easily dispense with it, if they so willed; I was not here for that. As for reputation, I had brought with me all I needed, and that of a character that a bit of village gossip could not affect. With all respect for the prejudices of the people, I should try not to increase them. My only desire was to open and teach a school in Bordentown, to which its outcast children could go and be taught; and I would emphasize that desire by adding that I wished no salary. I would open and teach such a school without remuneration, but my effort must have the majesty of the law, and the power vested in its offices behind it or it could not stand. If I secured a building and proceeded to open a school, it would be only one more private school like the score they already had; that the School Board, as officers of the law, with accepted rights and duties, must so far connect themselves with the effort as to provide quarters, the necessary furnishings, and to give due and respectable notice of the same among the people. In fact, it must stand as by their order, leaving the work and results to me.

I was not there for necessity. Fortunately I needed nothing of them — neither as an adventuress. I had no personal ambitions to serve, but as an observer of unwelcome conditions, and, as I thought, harmful as well, to try, so far as possible, the power of a good, wise, beneficent, and established state law, as against the force of ignorance, blind prejudice, and the tyranny of an obsolete, outlived public opinion. I desired to see them both



fairly placed upon their merits before an intelligent community, leaving the results to the winner. If the law, after trial, were not acceptable, or of use to the people serving their best interest, abolish or change it — if it were, enforce and sustain it.

My reply was much longer than the remarks that had called for it, but the pledge of good listening was faithfully kept.

When he spoke again, it was to ask if I desired my proposition to be laid before the School Board? I surely did. He would speak with the gentlemen this evening, and call a meeting for to-morrow. Our interview had consumed two hours, and we parted better friends than we commenced.

The following afternoon, to my surprise, I was most courteously invited to sit with the School Board in its deliberations, and I made the acquaintance of two more, plain, honest-minded gentlemen. The subject was fairly discussed, but with great misgivings, a kind of tender sympathy running through it all. At length Mr. Suydam arose, and, addressing his colleagues, said, "Gentlemen, we feel alike, I am sure, regarding the hazardous nature of this experiment and its probable results, but situated as we are, officers of a law which we are sworn to obey and enforce, can we legally decline to accede to this proposition, which is in every respect within the law. From your expressed opinions of last evening I believe we agree on this point, and I put the vote."

It was a unanimous yea, with the decision that the old closed schoolhouse be refitted, and a school commenced.

The school speedily outgrew its quarters, and Clara sent word to Oxford that she must have an assistant. Her brother Stephen secured the services of Miss Frances Childs, who subsequently became Mrs. Bernard Barton Vassall. Frances had just finished her first term as



teacher of a school in Oxford, and she proved a very capable assistant. Letters from, and personal interviews with, her have brought vividly before me the conditions of Clara's work in Bordentown.

She thus writes me of her happy memories:

When Clara's school in Bordentown had become so pronounced a success that she could not manage it alone, she sent for me. I had a separate schoolroom, the upstairs room over a tailor shop. I had about sixty pupils. Clara and I boarded and roomed together. The editor of the Bordentown "Gazette" roomed at the same place. He frequently commented on the fact that when Clara and I were in our room together, we were always talking and laughing. It was a constant wonder to him. He could not understand how we found so much to laugh at.

Clara was so sensitive, she felt it keenly when any pupil had to be punished, or any parent was disappointed, but she did not indulge very long in mourning or self-reproach, she knew she had done her best and she laughed and made the best of it. Clara had an unfailing sense of humor. She said to me once that of all the qualities she possessed, that for which she felt most thankful was her sense of humor. She said it helped her over many hard places.

Clara had quick wit, and was very ready with repartee and apt reply. I remember an evening when she brought to a close a rather lengthy discussion by a quick reply that set us all to laughing. We spent an evening at the home of the Episcopalian minister, who was one of the School Committee. The discussion turned to phrenology. Clara had great faith in it. The minister did not believe in it at all. They had quite an argument about it. He told Clara of a man who had suffered an injury to the brain which had resulted in the removal of a considerable part of it. He argued that if there was anything in



MISS FANNIE CHILDS  
(MRS. BERNARD VASSALL)

At the time she taught school  
with Miss Barton at Bordentown, N.J.



THE SCHOOLHOUSE AT BORDENTOWN



phrenology, that man would have been deprived of a certain group of mental capabilities, but that he got on very well with only a part of a brain. Clara replied quickly, "Then there's hope for me." So the discussion ended in a hearty laugh.

As a school-teacher, Clara Barton was a pronounced success. We are not dependent wholly upon her own account of her years as a teacher. From many and distant places her pupils rose up and called her blessed. Nothing pleased her more than the letters which she received from time to time, in after years, from men and women who had been pupils of hers and who wrote to tell her with what satisfaction and gratitude they remembered her instruction. Some of these letters were received by her as early as 1851, when she was at Clinton Institute. Her answers were long, appreciative, and painstaking. In those days Clara Barton was something of an artist, and had taught drawing and painting. One or two of her letters of this period have ornamented letterheads with birds and other scroll work. Her letters always abounded in good cheer, and often contained wholesome advice, though she did not preach to her pupils. Some of these letters from former pupils continued to reach her after she had become well known. Men in business and in political life wrote reminding her that they had been bad boys in her school, and telling of her patience, her tact, and the inspiration of her ideals.

Her home letters in the years before the war are the letters of a dutiful daughter and affectionate sister. She wrote to her father, her brothers, and especially to Julia, the wife of David Barton, who was perhaps the best correspondent in the family. She bore on her heart

all the family anxieties. If any member of the family was sick, the matter was constantly on her mind. She wanted to know every detail, in what room were they keeping him? Was the parlor chimney drawing well? And was every possible provision made for comfort? She made many suggestions as to simple remedies, and more as to nursing, hygiene, and general comfort. Always when there was sickness she wished that she were there. She wanted to assist in the nursing. She sent frequent messages to her brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews. The messages were always considerate, affectionate, and unselfish. She was not often homesick; in general she made the best of her absences from home, and busied herself with the day's task. But whenever there was anything at home which suggested an occasion for anxiety or an opportunity for service, then she wished herself home. She visualized the home at such times, and carried a mental picture of the house, the room, the bedside of the patient. One of these letters, written from Washington to Julia Barton, when her father was dangerously ill, may here be inserted as an illustration of her devotion to her parents and to all members of her family:

WASHINGTON, D.C., 29th Dec., 1860

DEAR SISTER:

I don't know what to say or how to write you, I am so uncertain of the scenes you may be passing through. In thought and spirit I am in the room with you every moment — that it is sad and *painful*, or sad and *desolate* I know. I can *almost* see, and *almost* hear, and *almost* know, how it all is — between us seems to be only the "veil so thin so strong," there are moments when I think I can brush it away with my hand and look upon that



dear treasured form and face, the earliest loved and latest mourned of all my life. Sometimes I am certain I hear the patient's feeble moan, and at others above me the *clouds* seem to divide, and, in the opening up among the blue and golden, that loved face, smiling and pleasant, looks calmly down upon me; then I think it is all past, and my poor father is at rest. Aye! more that he has learned the password to the Mystic Lodge of God and entered in: that the Providences and mysteries he has loved so much to contemplate are being made plain to him; that the inquiries of his intelligent soul are to be satisfied and that the God he has always worshiped he may now adore.

And in spite of all the grief, the agony of parting, there is pleasure in these reflections, and consolation in the thought that while we may have one the less tie upon earth, we shall have one more treasure in Heaven.

And yet again, when I look into my own heart, there is underlying the whole a little of the old-time hope — hope that he may yet be spared to us a little longer; that a few more months or years may be given us in which to prove the love and devotion of our hearts; that we may again listen to his wise counsels and kind admonitions, and hourly I pray Heaven that, if it be consistent with Divine arrangement, the cup may pass from him. But God's will, not mine, be done.

If my father still lives and realizes, will you tell him how much I love him and regret his sufferings, and how *much* rather I would endure them myself if *he* could be saved from them?

With love and sympathy to all,  
I am, your affectionate sister

CLARA

Her letters to members of her family are seldom of great importance. They concern themselves with the trivial details of her and their daily life; thoughtful an-

swers to all their inquiries, and expressions of affection and interest in all their concerns. In some respects the letters are more interesting which she wrote when she was temporarily in Oxford. One of these was addressed to her brother David, who had gone South to visit Stephen, then a resident of North Carolina. It was written at the time when she had been removed from her position in the Patent Office, and for a while was at home. David had written Julia in some concern lest he should not have provided in advance for her every possible want before his leaving her to go South. Clara replied to this letter, making merry over the "destitute" condition in which David had left his wife, and giving details about business affairs and home life. It is a thoroughly characteristic letter, full of fun and detail and neighborhood gossip and sisterly good-will. If her brothers were to stay in the South in hot weather, she wanted to be with them. She had already proposed to Stephen that he let her go South and look after him, and Stephen had sought to dissuade her, telling her that the conditions of life were uncomfortable, and that she would be shocked by seeing the almost nude condition of the negro laborers. None of these things frightened her. The only things she was afraid of were things about which she had told David, and we cannot help wishing we knew what they were. It is good to know that by this time the objects of her fear made rather a short list, for she was by nature timid and easily terrified, but had become self-reliant and strong.

NORTH OXFORD, June 17th, 1858

DEAR BROTHER:

This is an excessively warm day, and Julia scarcely thinks she can get her courage up to the sticking point

to sit down to letter-writing, but I will try it, for the weather is all alike to me, only just comfortably warm, and I can as well scribble letters as anything. We are rejoiced to hear such good reports from Stephen. It cannot be, however, that he was ready to return with you? For his sake I hope he could, but should be frightened if I knew he attempted it. We are all well; received your short letter in due time. Julia has discoursed considerably upon the propriety of that word "destitute" which you made use of. She says you left her with a barrel and a half of flour, a barrel and a half of crackers, a good new milch cow, fish, ham, dried beef, a barrel of pork, four good hogs in the pen, a field of early potatoes just coming on, a good garden, plenty of fowls, a good grain crop in and a man to take care of them, a good team, thirty cords of wood at the door and a horse and chaise to ride where she pleased. This she thinks is one of the last specimens of destitution. Can scarcely sleep at night through fear of immediate want — and beside we have not mentioned the crab apples. I should n't wonder if we have fifty bushels of them; this only depends upon the size they attain, there are certainly enough in number. The hoeing is all done once, and the piece out by Mr. Baker's gone over the second time. Uncle Joe helped. The taxes are paid, yours, Colonel Davis's, and Brine's. The two latter I have charged to them and pasted the receipts in the books. I have put down Brine's<sup>1</sup> time for last week and made out a new time page for July. Brine has gone to Worcester with old Eb to-day, and I have put that down and carried his account to a new page. Whitlock has not paid yet, but the 2'-40" man on the hill has paid .75. Old Mrs. Collier is going to pay before she gets herself a new pair of shoes, and Sam avers that she is not only in need of shoes, but stockings, to which fact he is a living eye-witness. Johnson "has n't a cent — will pay next week —" This, I believe, finishes

<sup>1</sup> Brine Murphy, a faithful hired man.

up the schedule of money matters until we report next time. Mr. Samuel Smith is dead. Was buried Thursday, I think. I have just written to the Colonel at Boston and to Cousin Ira<sup>1</sup> the intelligence from Stephen when we first learned that he was really better, and had hardly sent the letters away before the Judge came in. He was anxious to hear from us and also to attend the funeral, so took the morning train and came out, took dinner, and then he and father took Dick and the chaise and went to the funeral, came back, stayed to supper, and I went and carried him to the depot. We had a most delightful visit from him. Every time I see Cousin Ira, I think he is a better and better cousin. It is hardly possible for us to esteem him enough. I forgot to tell you about the garden. Julia has hoed it all over, set out the cabbage plants, waters them almost every day; they are looking finely. She has weeded all the beds, and Sam says he will help her some about the garden. Brine does n't seem to take an interest in the fine arts. Julia says she hopes you will not take a moment's trouble about us, for we are getting on finely and shall do so, but you must take care of yourself. We — i.e. Julia and I — shall ride down to the Colonel's this evening after sundown. I should like to see him and know he would like to hear from you again. I have not heard where Stephen is or how since you wrote, but trust he is no worse, and I also hope you may be able to favor and counsel him so as to keep him up when he gets back. I feel as much solicitude on your account as his, for I know how liable you are to get out of fix. I wish every day that I was there to see that both of you had what you needed to take and to be done for you. I was earnest in what I wished you to say to Stephen, that I was ready to go to Carolina or anywhere else if I could serve him; not that I want a job, as I should insist on putting my labor against my board, but earnestly if you are both going to try to summer there and Stephen

<sup>1</sup> Judge Ira M. Barton of Worcester.



so feeble as he is, I shall be glad to be with you. Still, if not proper or acceptable, I, of course, shall not urge myself or feel slighted, but I feel afraid to have you both there by yourselves; while you go away on business, he will be obliged to do something at home to get sick, and maybe I could do it for him if I were there, or at least take care of him in time. I am not afraid of naked negroes or rough houses, and you know the only things in all the world I should fear, for I told you — nothing else aside from these. I have no precaution or care for anything there could be there, but I have said enough and too much. Stephen may think I am willing to make myself more plenty than welcome, but I have obeyed the dictates of my feelings and judgment and can do no more, and I could not have done it and done less, so I leave it. If I can serve you, tell me. I have seen neither of the Washington tourists yet, and I went to the depot this morning to meet Irving <sup>1</sup> if he was there, but he did not come. Please tell me if Mr. Vassall talks of going to Carolina this summer, or will he come North? I have offered Julia this space to fill up, but she says I have told all the news and declines, and it is almost time to get ready to ride; so good-bye, and write a word or two often. Don't trouble to send long letters, it is hot work to write. Sleep all you can, don't drink ice water, be careful about grease, don't expose yourself to damp evenings or mornings if too misty, or you will get the chills. Love to Stephen. Will he ever write me, I wonder?

From your affectionate sister

CLARA

Great as was Clara Barton's success in Bordentown, she did not move forward without opposition. Although she had built up the public school to a degree of efficiency which it had not before known, she met the resolute

<sup>1</sup> Irving S. Vassall, her nephew.



opposition of those who objected to a woman's control of a school as important as this had now grown to be. It was rather pathetic that her very success should have been used as an occasion of opposition. The school was alleged to be too large for a woman to manage. A woman had made it large and had managed it while it was in process of becoming large, and was continuing to manage it very well. However, the demand for a male principal grew very strong, and, against the wishes of a large majority of the pupils, a male principal was chosen. Clara Barton would not remain and occupy a second place. Moreover, it was time for her to leave the schoolroom. For almost twenty years she had been constantly teaching, and her work at Bordentown, never easy, had ended in a record of success which brought its own reaction and disappointment. Suddenly she realized that her energy was exhausted. Her voice completely failed. A nervous collapse, such as came to her a number of times later in life, laid her prostrate. She left her great work at Bordentown and went to Washington to recuperate. She did not know it, but she was leaving the schoolroom behind her forever.

In those days Clara Barton was much given to writing verse. She never entirely gave it up. The most of her poetical writing during this period is of no especial interest, but consists of verses for autograph albums, and other ephemeral writing. Once, while she was at Bordentown, she tried a rhymed advertisement. At least twice while she was teaching in that village, she made a round trip to Philadelphia on the steamboat John Stevens. On the second occasion the steamboat had been redecorated, and she scribbled a jingle concerning its attractions in

the back of her diary. She may have had some idea that her Pegasus could be profitably harnessed to the chariot of commerce, and it is possible that she offered this little jingle to the proprietors of the boat or to the editor of the Bordentown "Gazette," who roomed at the house where she boarded. The files of that enterprising publication have not been searched, but they probably would show that now and then Clara Barton handed to the editor some poetical comment on passing events. So far as is known, however, these lines about the beauty of the rejuvenated John Stevens have not appeared in print before, and it is now too late for them to be of value in increasing the business of her owners. It is pleasant, however, to have this reminder of her occasional outings while she was teaching school, and to know that she enjoyed them as she did her river journey to Philadelphia and back:

## ADVERTISEMENT

*Written on board the John Stevens between Bordentown and Philadelphia  
March 12, 1853*

You've not seen the John Stevens since her new dress  
she donned?

Why, you'd think she'd been touched by a fairy's wand!

Such carpets, such curtains, just sprang into light,

Such mirrors bewildering the overcharged sight.

Such velvets, such cushions, such sofas and all,

Then the polish that gleams on her glittering wall.

Now if it be true that you've not seen her yet,

We ask you, nay! *urge* you, implore and beset,

That you will no longer your interests forget,

But at once *take a ticket* as we have to-day,

And our word as a warrant —

You'll find it will pay.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE HEART OF CLARA BARTON

WHEN Clara Barton left the schoolroom for the life of a clerk in Washington, she was well past thirty years of age. When the war broke out, and she left the Patent Office for the battle-field, she was forty. Why was not she already married? Her mother married at seventeen; her sister married early: why was she single and teaching school at thirty, or available for hospital service at forty? And why did she not marry some soldier whom she tended? Did any romance lie behind her devotion to what became her life-work? Had she suffered any disappointment in love before she entered upon her career?

The question whether Clara Barton was ever in love has been asked by every one who has attempted anything approaching a sketch of her career. Mr. Epler's biography contained a chapter on this subject, but later it was found so incomplete and unsatisfactory it was thought best to omit it and to await the opening of her personal and official papers. These now are available, as well as the personal recollections of those of her relatives whose knowledge of her life includes any possibility of affairs of the heart.

On the subject of her personal affections, Clara Barton was very reticent. To the present writer she said that she chose, somewhat early in life, the course which seemed to her more fruitful of good for her than matrimony. In her girlhood she was shy, and, when she found her life vocation, as she then esteemed it, as a teacher,

she was so much interested in her school that she gave little thought to matrimony, and was satisfied that on the whole it would be better in her case if she lived unmarried. She had little patience, however, with women who affect to despise men. Always loyal to her own sex, and proud of every woman who accomplished anything notable, she was no man-hater, but, on the contrary, enjoyed the society of men, trusted their judgment, and liked their companionship.

Her nephew, Stephen E. Barton, furnishes me this paragraph:

My aunt said to me at one time that I must not think she had never known any experience of love. She said that she had had her romances and love affairs like other girls; but that in her young womanhood, though she thought of different men as possible lovers, no one of them measured up to her ideal of a husband. She said to me that she could think of herself with satisfaction as a wife and mother, but that on the whole she felt that she had been more useful to the world by being free from matrimonial ties.

So far as her diaries and letters show, she remained heart-whole through the entire period of her girlhood in Oxford. There was, however, a young man of about her own age, born in Oxford, and a very distant relative between whom and herself there existed something approaching affection. The families were long-time friends, and the young people had interests in common. A lady who remembers him well says: "She was fond of him and he of her. He was a handsome young fellow, and Clara once said to me that she should not want the man to have all the good looks in the family."



This friendship continued for many years, and developed on the part of the young man a very deep affection, and on Clara's part sincere respect. He visited her when she was a student in Clinton Institute, and was of real service to her there, making fine proof of his faithful friendship, but she could not be sure that she loved him.

She had another ardent admirer in Oxford, who followed her to Bordentown and there pressed his suit. Clara had long corresponded with him, and for a time was uncertain how much she cared for him. This young man had come to know her while she was a teacher in Oxford and she was boarding in the family where he lived. In 1849 he went to California in search of gold, and on his return was eager to take her out of the schoolroom and establish her in a home. For this purpose he visited her in Bordentown. She welcomed him, and sincerely wished that she could love him, but, while she held him in thorough respect, she did not see in him the possibilities of a husband, such as she would have chosen. He pressed his suit, and she sorrowfully declined. They remained firm friends as long as he lived.

A third young man is known to have made love to her while she was at Clinton Institute. He was the brother of one of the young women in the school whom she cherished as a dear friend. He was a young man of fine character, but her heart did not respond to him.

Two or more of these affairs lay heavy on her heart and conscience about the time of her leaving Clinton Institute and of her teaching in Bordentown. She was then in correspondence with three young men who loved her, and in a state of some mental uncertainty. If letters were delayed she missed them, and recorded in her diary:



Rather melancholy. Don't know why. I received no intelligence from certain quarters.

In the spring of 1852 she had a brief period of depression, growing, in part at least, out of her uncertainty in these matters. On Tuesday, March 2, 1852, she wrote in her diary:

Morning cold and icy. Walked to school. Dull day and unpleasant, cheerless indoors and out. Cannot see much in these days worth living for; cannot but think it will be a quiet resting-place when all these cares and vexations and anxieties are over, and I no longer give or take offense. I am badly organized to live in the world, or among society; I have participated in too many of its unpleasant scenes; have always looked on its most unhappy features and have grown weary of life at an age when other people are enjoying it most.

On Thursday, March 13, she wrote:

I have found it extremely hard to restrain the tears to-day, and would have given almost anything to have been alone and undisturbed. I have seldom felt more friendless, and I believe I ever feel enough so. I see less and less in the world to live for, and in spite of all my resolution and reason and moral courage and every thing else, I grow weary and impatient. I know it is wicked and perhaps foolish, but I cannot help it. There is not a living thing but would be just as well off without me. I contribute to the happiness of not a single object; and often to the unhappiness of many and always of my own, for I am never happy. True, I laugh and joke, but could weep that very moment, and be the happier for it.

"There's many a grief lies hid, not lost,  
And smiles the least befit who wear them most."

How long I can endure such a life I do not know, but often wish that more of its future path lay on the other

side of the present. I am grateful when so many of the days pass away. But this repining is of no use, and I would not say or write it for any ear or eye but my own. I cannot help thinking it, and it is a relief to say it to myself; but I will indulge in such useless complaints no more, but commence once more my allotted task.

The mood did not last long. Its immediate occasion had been a not very cheerful letter from friends in Oxford, and a discussion with the mother of a dull pupil who was troubled because her daughter was not learning faster. Three days later she was seeking to account for her depression by some possible telepathic influence from home; for she had word of the burning of Stephen's factory. Far from being the more depressed by this really bad news, she was much relieved to know that he had not rushed into the burning building, as would have been just like him, and have been killed or injured in trying to save the property or to help some one else.

On Friday night she had finished a reasonably good week, and had a longer letter than usual from the lover whom she had known longest. It "of course pleased me in proportion to its length." She adds, "I am puzzled to know how I can manage one affair, and fear I cannot do it properly."

The reader of these yellow pages, after seventy years and more, knows better than she knew then what was troubling her most, and can smile at what caused her so much concern.

By the following Tuesday she resolved to "begin to think earnestly of *immediate* future. Have not made any definite plans."

This necessity of planning for the immediate future

brought back her bad feelings. She wrote on Wednesday, March 24:

Think I shall not write as much in future. Grow dull and I fear selfish in my feelings and care less what is going on. Not that I think less of others, but less of myself, and am more and more certain every day that there is no such thing as true friendship, at least for me; and I will not dupe and fool myself with the idle, vain hobby any longer. It is all false; in fact, the whole world is false. This brings me to my old inquiry again, what is the use of living in it? I can see no possible satisfaction or benefit arising from my life; others may from theirs.

A week later she wrote that she had no letters, but had "grown indifferent and did not care either to write or to receive letters."

She had resolved not to write so much, but she went on:

I am thinking to-night of the future, and what my next move must be. Wish I had some one to advise me, or that I could speak to some one of it. Had ever one poor girl so many strange, wild thoughts, and no one to listen or share one of them, or even to realize that my head contains one idea beyond the present foolish moment?

But she resolves to stop this vain and moody introspection:

I will not allow myself any more such grumbling! I know it is wicked. But how can I make myself happy and contented under such circumstances as I am ever placed in?

Her diary then grew irregular, with no entries between April 20 and May 25. Within that time she solved a part of her love-problem:

Have kept no journal for a month or more. Had nothing to note, but some things are registered where they will never be effaced in my lifetime.

But she finished her school successfully; went to Trenton and bought a silk dress. She filled the back of this book with a list of the English poets with the dates of their birth and death, and a sentence or two descriptive of each of the more prominent. She had this habit of writing, in the back of her journal, things that belonged to no one day. The volume previous contained a sentimental poem of a tragic parting of lovers, and a lachrymose effusion entitled "A Prayer for Death."

These entries and incidents are cited because they are wholly exceptional. While she was ever morbidly sensitive, to the day of her death, and under strain of criticism or lack of appreciation given to great and wholly disproportionate depression of spirits, these entries, made when she had no less than three possible matrimonial entanglements in prospect, and was not sure whether she wanted any, must be the sole documentary evidence of a strain from which both she and the men concerned wholly recovered. All of the men are known by name, and they married and left families, and were little if any the worse, and quite possibly were the better, for having loved Clara Barton. Nor, though the perplexities of having too many lovers, mingled as these perplexities were with the daily problems of the schoolroom and a long absence from home, during which her home letters made her homesick, did the experience do her any permanent harm. Not long did she wish to die.

Indeed, her mood was soon a very different one. The entries that have been cited were made at Hightstown.



Next year she was at Bordentown, and there she thrived so well she had to send back to her home town for an assistant. She still had one love affair, already referred to, but it had ceased to depress her seriously.

A young woman of thirty is not to be blamed for stopping to consider that she may not always be bothered by three simultaneous offers of marriage. On the other hand, while all of these were worthy men, there was not one of them so manifestly stronger than she that she felt she was safe in giving her heart to him. The vexations of the schoolroom suggested the quiet of a home as a pleasant contrast, but which should she choose, and were there any of the men to whom she could forever look up with affection and sustained regard?

For each one of these three young men she appears to have had a genuine regard. She liked them, all of them, and it was not easy for her to see them go out of her life. The time came when each of them demanded to know where he stood in her affections; and each time this occurred she had a period of heart-searching, and thought herself the most miserable young woman alive. In each case, however, she came to the sane and commendable decision, not to bestow her hand where her heart could not go utterly.

From one who knew her intimately in those days I have this statement:

Clara Barton had many admirers, and they were all men whom she admired and some whom she almost loved. More men were interested in her than she was ever interested in; some of them certainly interested her, yet not profoundly. I do not think she ever had a love affair that stirred the depths of her being. The truth is,



Clara Barton was herself so much stronger a character than any of the men who made love to her that I do not think she was ever seriously tempted to marry any of them. She was so pronounced in her opinions that a man who wanted a submissive wife would have stood somewhat in awe of her. However good a wife she might have made to a man whom she knew to be her equal, and for whom she felt real admiration, she would not have been an ideal wife for a man to whom she could not look up, not only in regard to moral character, which in every case was above reproach, but also as to intellect, education, and ambition.

Clara Barton's diaries did not ordinarily indulge in self-analysis. She recorded the events of the day briefly, methodically, and without much comment. She indicated by initials the young men to whom she wrote and from whom she received letters, relatives being spoken of by their first names. The passages quoted from her diaries are exceptional. While she was highly sensitive, and morbidly conscientious, her usual moods were those of quiet and sensible performance of her day's work.

For ten years after she began to teach, she was shut out from any real opportunity for love. Her elevation to the teacher's platform, while still a child, shut out her normal opportunity for innocent flirtation. Love hardly peeped in at her during her teens, or in her early twenties. By the time it came to her, other interests had gained a long start. She was ambitious, she was determined to find out what she was good for, and to do something worth while in life. Had some young man come into her life as worthy as those who made love to her, and who was her equal or superior in ability and education, she might have learned to love him. As it was,

she decided wisely both for herself and for the men who sought her hand.

Having thus chosen, she did not mourn her fate. She enjoyed her friendships with men and with women, and lived her busy, successful, and happy life. She did not talk of these affairs, nor did she write of them. She retained the personal friendship of the men whom she refused; and two of them, who lived not far from her in New England, made their friendship manifest in later years. Few people knew that they had ever been rejected lovers of hers; they were esteemed and lifelong friends.

There were times when her heart cried out for something more than this. From the day of her birth she was too isolated. Her public career began before her shy childhood had ended. She was too solitary; she had "strange, wild thoughts," and no one to whom to confide them. She could have welcomed the love of a strong, true man. She was always over-sensitive. She was cut to the very heart by experiences which she ought to have treated as almost negligible. She met opposition, criticism, injustice with calm demeanor, but she bled within her armor, and covered herself with undeserved reproaches and unhappy reflections that she seemed doomed to give and to suffer pain. In some respects she was peculiarly unfitted to meet the world alone. But she met it and conquered it. She turned her loneliness into a rich companionship of friendships; she forgot her solitude in unselfish ministry. Spite of her shrinking nature, her natural timidity, her over-sensitiveness, she lived a full and happy life. Those who knew her remember few laments and fewer tears, but many a con-

stant smile, a quick and unfailing sense of humor, a healthy and hearty laugh, a ready sympathy and a generous spirit. The love which she was forbidden to bestow upon any one man, she gave to the world at large, and the world loved her in return.

The most direct reference to affairs of the heart which Clara Barton appears to have made in her letters is in a letter written by her to her cousin, Judge Robert Hale, on August 16, 1876.

When Clara Barton went abroad in search of health in 1869, she hardly expected to return. She took two thousand dollars' worth of bonds which belonged to her and deposited them with a friend, with instructions that if she died, the money was to be used for the improvement of the Barton lot in the Oxford cemetery. It was a large lot on the brow of a hill, and had been heavily washed by the rains. She wished it properly graded and cared for, and this was likely to be, and proved to be, an expensive undertaking.

This friend did not keep the bonds separate from his own property, and in time of financial stress he sold them and applied the money to his own needs. When she returned and learned of this, she was displeased. To her it seemed hardly less than a criminal action. She had no purpose of prosecuting him, but, on the other hand, she wished him to realize that this was something more than an ordinary debt. She put the matter in the hands of her cousin, Judge Hale, who accepted a note in lieu of the bonds. This did not please her, and she wrote her cousin a letter which caused him to chide her as being a rather importunate creditor.

She replied that this was not true, but that she herself

had kept all her money for French relief separate from her own money, and she always kept trust funds separate from her own money, and she expected people dealing with her to do the same. She said:

I am not, as I seem to you, a "relentless creditor." On the contrary, I would give him that debt rather than break him down in his business, or if the gift would keep him from going down. I am less grieved about the loss than I am about the manner of his treating my trust. I was his teacher and he was one of my boys. I have always dealt straight and plain with my boys. I am not a lawyeress, nor a diplomat, only a woman artless to simplicity; but I am as square as a brick, and I expect my boys to be square.

In some way Judge Hale had gotten the idea that this former pupil of hers had been a youthful lover, and that that fact had influenced her in the loan of the money. It is in reply to this suggestion that she said:

It seems very ludicrous to me, the idea which has fastened itself upon you, relative to my supposed love affair. I, poor I, who never had a love affair in all my born days, and really don't much expect one after this date! My dear cousin, I trust this letter will show you clearly that my pecuniary affairs and my heart affairs are not at all mixed; and I beg you to believe that, if in the future I should be stricken by the tender malady, I shall never attempt to facilitate or perpetuate the matter by the loaning of money. My observation has not been favorable to such a course of procedure.

Whether she ultimately recovered the two thousand dollars or not, her biographer does not know, but she lived to put the cemetery lot in good order, and in her will she left a fund of sixteen hundred dollars for its per-



petual maintenance. She also kept her financial transactions free from any heart complications. Her letter is a pretty certain indication that no love affair had ever taken very strong hold of her in the first fifty years of her life.

The war might easily have brought to Clara Barton a husband if she had inclined toward one, but she found other interests, and was happy in them. Later in life she had on more than one occasion to consider the possibility of a home; and we shall have occasion to make brief mention of one or two of these incidents. What is essential now is to know that Clara Barton did not enter upon her life-work by reason of a broken heart. Her relations with men were wholesome and enjoyable, but none of them brought her such complete assurance of a happy home as to win her from what she came to feel was her life-work. Some possibilities of matrimony gave her deep concern at the time; but she was able to tell Judge Hale in 1876, when she was fifty-five years of age, that she had never had a love affair, and did not expect to have one; but that if she had, she would keep it wholly separate from her financial interests; which was a very sensible resolution, and one to which she lived up faithfully.



## CHAPTER X

### FROM SCHOOLROOM TO PATENT OFFICE

CLARA BARTON's work in Bordentown was a marked success. But it involved strenuous labor and not a little mental strain. When it was over, she found her reserve force exhausted. In the latter part of 1854 her voice gave out, and she gave up teaching, for a time as she supposed, and went to Washington.

She did not know it, but she was leaving the school-room forever. Yet she continued to think of herself as a teacher, and to consider her other work as of a more or less temporary character. Twenty years later, she still reminded herself and others that "fully one fifth of my life has been passed as a teacher of schools." The school-room had become temporarily impracticable, and she wanted to see Washington and to spend time enough in the capital of the Nation to know something about it. Washington became her home and the center of her life plans for the next sixty years.

Clara Barton did not long remain idle in Washington. At the request of Colonel Alexander De Witt, the representative in Congress from her home district, she received an appointment as clerk in the Patent Office at a salary of \$1400 a year. She was one of the first, and believed herself to have been the very first, of women appointed to a regular position in one of the departments, with work and wages equal to that of a man. Her appointment was made under President Pierce, in 1854. The records when searched in later years were found to

be imperfect, but the following letter from the Honorable Alexander DeWitt to the Honorable Robert McClelland, Secretary of the Interior, shows clearly her status at the time of its date, September 22, 1855:

Having understood the Department had decided to remove the ladies in the Patent Office on the first of October, I have taken the liberty to address a line on behalf of Miss Clara Barton, a native of my town and district, who has been employed in the past year in the Patent Office, and I trust to the entire satisfaction of the Commissioner.

She had, indeed, performed her work to the entire satisfaction of the Commissioner. There had been serious leaks in the Patent Office, some dishonest clerks selling secrets to their own financial advantage and to the scandal of the department and injury of owners of patents. She became confidential clerk to the Honorable Charles Mason, — "Judge Mason" he was called, — the Superintendent of Patents. That official himself had a hard time under the Secretary of the Interior, Robert McClelland.

At different periods in her life, Clara Barton had several different styles of handwriting. There is a marked contrast between the clear, strong penmanship which she used when she left the schoolroom and the badly deteriorated form which she employed after her more serious nervous breakdowns. When she was lecturing, she wrote a very large hand, easy to read from manuscript, and that affected her correspondence. Some of her lectures are written in characters nearly a half-inch in height. Then she reverted to the "copper-plate" style of her young womanhood, and in that clear,

fine, strong penmanship she wrote till the end of her life.

Handwriting such as hers was a joy to the head of the Patent Department. It was clear, regular, easily read, and accurate. The characters were well formed, and the page, when she had done with it, was clean and clear as that of an old missal.

She was not long in rousing the jealousy of men in the department who loafed and smoked and drew their pay. Some of them were anything but polite to her. They blew smoke in her face, and otherwise affronted her. But she attended strictly to her business. She was removed, but Judge Mason gave her a "temporary appointment," and she worked, sometimes in the office, and sometimes, when political affairs were such that her presence there gave rise to criticism, at home. She waded through great volumes and filled other great volumes. A letter to her brother Stephen in the autumn of 1856 gives some idea of what was happening in Washington:

Monday Morning, Sept. 28, 1856

DEAR BROTHER:

I don't know why I have not written you before, only I suppose I thought you had enough to occupy your attention without my uninteresting scrawls. I have been hearing of late that you were better than when you first came home, but I have not heard a word when you expect to return.

We are having a remarkably fine fall, cool and clean, and I have not seen more than a dozen mosquitoes this summer.

The city has just been somewhat disturbed, i.e., the official portions of it (and this is the greater portion at this particular time), in consequence of the resignation of Judge Mason, which was tendered to the President some

eight days ago, and no notice whatever taken of it until day before yesterday morning, the Judge in the meantime drawing his business to a close, packing his library, and Mrs. Mason packing their wardrobes, and on Friday evening, when I called on them, they were all ready to leave for Iowa next Tuesday at three o'clock. They both explained particularly the nature of the circumstances which induced them to leave. You have known before that Congress guaranteed to the Commissioner of Patents the exclusive right of making all temporary appointments in his department, and that Secretary McClelland had previously interfered in and claimed the same. He commenced upon the most vulnerable points, something like a year ago, when he removed us ladies, and, partially succeeding in his attempts, has been enlarging his grasp ever since, and a few weeks ago sent a note to Judge Mason forbidding him to appoint any temporary clerk unless subject to his decision and concurrence, giving to the Judge the right to *nominate*, reserving to himself the privilege of *appointing*. Then Congress having voted some \$70,000 to be used by the Commissioner of Patents in procuring sugar-cane slips (if so they might be termed) from South America for the purpose of restoring the tone of the sugar growth in the South, which is becoming exhausted, and the Commissioner having procured his agent to go for them, the Secretary interfered, said it was all useless to send an agent, the military could attend to it; he had the agent discharged, and delayed the matter until it was too late to obtain the cuttings this year, and the Commissioner, being thus deprived of the privilege of complying with the directions received from Congress, and thereby unable to acquit himself creditably, resigned, but at the last moment the President came to his room, and invested him with power to act as he pleased in all matters over which the law gave him jurisdiction, and he promised to remain until the Secretary should return from Michigan, and see



how he behaved then. The Secretary is making himself extremely odious; he may have, and doubtless has, friends and admirers, but I never met with one of them.

Fannie writes me that little Mary has burned her arm; is it badly burned? Does father still think of coming South this winter? Hobart was a slippery stick, wasn't he, and what did he mean? How do you arrange with Fisher? Some way I hope that will last so that he can't slip his halter and leave poor Dave to chase after him, with a measure of oats in one hand and a cudgel in the other, as he has all summer. You will come to Washington, I am *sure*, on your way to Carolina; it is best that you should—I want so much to see you. I want to talk a good long talk with you that I cannot write. I have so many things to say, all *very important*, of course. But write me soon and tell me when you will return. I must go over to the city and look what I can do to make ready for the comers.

Please give my love to all inquiring friends; write and come and see us.

Your affectionate sister

CLARA

How stand politics, and who is going to be President? The Democrats are looking pale in this quarter.

Buchanan was elected, and Clara Barton continued in the Patent Office for a time unmolested. But the election lost her one of her best friends in Washington, Colonel De Witt, a resident of Oxford, and representative from her home district, through whom her first appointment had come, and who had been her constant friend. Just before the inauguration of President Buchanan, she wrote her home letter to Julia, and sent it by the hand of the retiring representative, who volunteered to take her letter to her home:



WASHINGTON, D.C., Mar. 3rd, 1857

DEAR SISTER JULIA:

Our good friend Colonel De Witt has kindly offered to become the bearer and deliverer of any despatches which I may wish to send to Yankee Land, and knowing from good authority that a call upon you might not be a hard medicine for him to take, I avail myself of the opportunity to tell you that we are all engaged in making a president; intend, if no bad luck follow, to finish him off and send him home to-morrow. I hope he may finally give satisfaction, for there has been a great deal of pains taken in fitting and making him up, but there are so many in the family to wear him that it is scarcely possible that he should be an exact fit for them all. . . .

We are at our same old tricks yet here in the capitol, i.e., killing off everybody who doesn't just happen to suit us or our peculiar humor at the moment; we have indeed some shocking occurrences at times. You have probably seen some account of the homicide which took place in the Pension Office the other day; if not I think the Colonel will be so kind as to give you some of the first points and relieve me from the disagreeable task of reciting so abrupt and melancholy a matter. My opinion of the matter is that the man who gave the offense, and from whom the apology was due, remained doggedly at his office, armed, and shot down his adversary who came to make the very explanation which the offender should have sought. Colonel Lee (I think), instead of sitting there at his desk hugging a concealed pistol to his unchristian and unmanly breast, should at that very moment have been on his way to Alexandria to apologize to Mr. House for the previous night's offense. The man may perhaps meet the sympathy of the world at large, but at present he has not mine.

And last night a terrible thing occurred within the district. It appears that the almshouse and workhouse are, or rather were, both the same building, very large,

new and fine. Last night, curiosity or something else equally powerful caused the keepers of the establishment all to leave the premises and come up to the city, a distance of three miles, I suppose, locking the building very securely, fastening in all the inmates, I have no idea how many, but the house took fire, and burned down, consuming a great portion of its inhabitants, old, lame, and sick men and women and helpless infants. Only such were saved as could force an escape through the barred windows—was not that *horrible*? Now it would seem to me that in both these cases there was room left for reflection on the part of some one. I think there would be for me if I were in either of their places

I would attempt to tell you something how sorry I am that the Colonel is going home to return to us no more, but if I wrote all night I should not have half expressed it. I am sorry for myself, that I shall have no good friend left to whom I can run with all my annoyances, and find always a sympathizer and benefactor, and especially am I sorry for our (generally) old State. I pity their folly; they have cut off their own hands after having blocked all their wheels; they cannot stir a peg after the Colonel leaves; they have not a man on the board they can move; and who is to blame but their own poor foolish selves? Well, I *am* sorry, and if crying would do any good I would cry a week, steadily. I don't know but I shall as it is. . . .

Remember me especially to "Grandpa," and tell Dave I like him a leetle particularly since he did n't sign that petition.

From your affectionate sister

CLARA

For a time after the election, political matters settled down, and Clara continued her work unmolested. She was home for a time in the spring of 1857, but back in Washington through the summer, and in that time went

through huge volumes of technical description and copied the essential parts into record books for the purpose of reference and preservation.

It would make this volume more consecutive in its connections if out of her letters were culled only such items as related to particular topics; but her letters must be read as she wrote them, with news, gossip, inquiry about home matters, answers to questions, and all just as she thought of them and wrote about them. In the early autumn of 1857 she wrote to Julia:

WASHINGTON, D.C., Sept. 6th, 1857

DEAR SISTER JULIA:

I dare not ask you to excuse me for neglecting you so badly, but still I have a kind of indefinable hope that you will do so, when you remember how busy I am and that this is summer with its long weary days and short sleepy nights; and then the "*skeeters!*" Just as soon as you try to write a letter in the evening to anybody, they must come in flocks to "stick their bills." In vain have I placarded myself all over on every side of me, "Stick no bills here" — it does n't do a bit of good, and but for the gallant defense of a couple of well-fitted nets at my windows, I should long ere this have been pasted, scarred, and battered as the wooden gateway to an old theatre, or the brick wall adjacent to an eleven-penny-bit lecture-room. I should, however, have written out of selfishness just to hear from you, only that by some means intelligence gets to us that father is better, and the rest of you well. My health is much better than when I was at home. I have been gaining ever since Miss Haskell came. She relieves me many ways. The yellow has almost gone off of my forehead, else it has grown yellow all alike; but it looks *better*, let it be which way it may; it is n't so spotted. Bernard has been home and got cured of the chills and fever, and gone back again; expect

Vest. home soon. I am not much better settled than ever; liable to pick up my traps and start any day. I am glad you found my mits, for I began to think I must have had a crazy fit and destroyed my things while I was at home. To pay for losing my parasol, I made myself carry one that cost *fifty-six cents!* Did you ever hear of such a thing? Well, it is the best I have had all summer, and I walked to church under it to-day; so much to pay for carelessness. I also left a large bottle of some kind of drugs, I guess in your parlor cupboard. Please give it closet room awhile, and I will come sometime between this and the middle of January at farthest and relieve you of it. I may spend Christmas with you, cannot tell yet, but I shall be home while the snow is on the ground if I live, and maybe before it comes, but if I do I shall stay until it is there, for I am determined to have a sleigh-ride with old Dick. Oh, I am so glad every time I think of it, that he beat Dr. Newton, blast his saucy picture! Will try it again when the snow comes.

I have written "a heap" since my return; let me see, seven large volumes, the size of ledgers, I have read all through and collected and transferred something off of every page — 3500 pages of dry lawyer writing is something to wade through in three months; and out of them I have filled a *great* volume almost as heavy as I can lift. My arm is tired, and my poor thumb is all calloused holding my pen. I begin to feel that my Washington life is drawing to a close, and I think of it without regret, not that I have not prized it, not that it has not on the whole been a great blessing to me. I realize all this, but if I could tell you in detail all I have gone through along with it, you would agree with me that it had not been *all* sunshine. I look back upon it as a weary pilgrimage which it was necessary for me to accomplish. I have nearly done, so it has been a sturdy battle, hard-fought, and I trust well won.

But how do you all do? How are Grandfather and



Dave, and the little ones? How I do want to see you all! Has father's leg got so he can use it well again? Does it pain him? Do the children go to school? How are Mary's<sup>1</sup> congress gaiters? — a perfect fit, I hope. Tell her to be a good girl and learn to read, for I shall want to hear her when I come home. Wash Bubby's<sup>2</sup> eyes in *bluing* water; it may improve the color. Please give my love to Cousin Vira, Mrs. Aborn, and after this according to discretion. Is Martha in New Worcester? I should like to see her. We have had a fine summer thus far — very few hot days.

Please tell father that I was not silent so long because I had forgotten him, but I had scarce time to write, and I get so tired of writing. Please write me soon and tell me all the news. I will bring your jewelry when I come. I feel guilty to have taken it away.

Your sister, most affectionately &c &c &c

CLARA

The Democrats had some reason to look pale, for no one could predict just how well John C. Fremont would run. But he was not elected. The Democrats returned to power, with James Buchanan as their successful candidate. As the election approached, it became evident that this was to be the result, and the Democratic chief clerk of the Pension Office, certain that he was to succeed Judge Mason, desired Clara Barton to be as good a Democrat as possible that she might not fail to be his confidential clerk: but she was already a "Black Republican." Her father had been an old-time Jackson Democrat, and the administration under which she was appointed was Democratic; but she heard Charles Sumner's great speech on the "Crime Against Kansas" and

<sup>1</sup> Mary — Mrs. Mamie Barton Stafford, daughter of David.

<sup>2</sup> Bubby — Stephen E. Barton, son of David, Miss Barton's brother.



she was convinced. "Freedom is national; slavery is sectional," he said, and she believed him

She was not yet sure that slavery ought to be interfered with where it was, but she was with the party that opposed its further extension, and this imperiled her future as a clerk if James Buchanan was elected. Just before the November election, she wrote to Julia, David's wife:

WASHINGTON, D.C., Nov. 2nd, 1856  
Sunday Evening

DEAR SISTER JULIA:

Your looked-for letter came safe to hand; you may well suppose we were anxious to hear from you considering the alarming nature of the one which had preceded it. Stephen must have had a very distressing time, but I am so glad to know that he is relieved and has decided to let some one else be his judge in reference to getting out. I hope he will continue firm in the faith and venture *nothing*; it is of no use to strive against nature; he must have time to recruit and he has no idea of the time and care it will require to rid his system of the troublesome disease which has fastened upon him. I am glad you have found a physician there who knew how to name his disease. I have known all the time, since the first time he wrote me of his illness in Carolina, what the trouble was, and said when I was at home that he had the dumb chills, but no one would believe an ignoramus like me. I have no doubt but he had had his ague fits regularly since his first attack without ever once mistrusting the real cause of his bad feelings. People say there are two classes of community that the shaking ague never attacks, viz., those who are too lazy to shake and those who will not stop. Stephen belongs to the latter and I to the former, so we must have dumb ague if any. I am glad that father is better, and hope I shall not hear of David's getting down again this winter; he must keep well enough

to come out and see us. We are all very well, only that I have a slight cold, which will wear off, I guess. The weather is delightful, but getting quite cool. We saw a few flakes of snow last Friday, but one would never mistrust it by the Indian summer haze which is spread over the city this evening.

We are all dreading the confusion of day after tomorrow night, when the election returns are made. There will be such an excitement, but the Democrats are the most certain set of men that I ever saw; their confidence of success in the approaching contest is unbounded. Judge Mason has gone to Iowa to vote, and Mr. Stugert (our chief clerk) will leave the city tomorrow night in order to reach Pennsylvania in time the next day. He is one of Mr. Buchanan's most intimate friends. He called to take me to Georgetown one evening last week, and during the evening he conversed respecting the approaching election. His spirits were unbounded, and his confidence in the right results of the election as unbounded. He wished me to say I would be commissioner and chief clerk for him until his return, but I declined the honor, declaring myself a *Freemonger*. This he would not hear a word of and walked all around the parlors in company with the Reverend Mr. Halmead assuring all the company that I was an "old school Loco," "dyed in the wool," and my father before me was the same, and requested them to place no confidence in anything I might say on the present occasion, as the *coffee* was exceedingly strong and he passed my cup up *five* times. I thought this latter three fifths of a mistake, but could not quite tell.

Lo, Bubby [Stephen, her nephew] says he will come to Washington. Well, he must go and ask Colonel De Witt to make him a page, and if the Colonel can do it, Bub can come and stay; he is large enough to carry letters and papers about the House, and do little errands for the Members. I guess he had best ask the Colonel

and see what he says about it. Irving is getting ready to take our mail to the office and I must hasten to close my scrawl for the present. I had intended to write to Stephen to-day, but it is rather late; I may get time the first of the week, although I have a heavy week's business in contemplation. How I wish I could drop in and see you all to-night, but that cannot be just yet. Please give my love to "Grandpa" [her father] and then all the others in succession as they come along, down to *Dick* [the horse]; is he as nice as ever? I want to see him too. Please remember me to Elvira and Mrs. Aborn, and write me soon again.

Tell Stephen he is a nice fellow to mind so well, and he must keep doing so. Irving is ready.

So good-bye.

Your affectionate sister

CLARA

The country was steadily drifting toward war, and Clara Barton felt the danger of it. Although she was convinced that slavery ought not to be extended further, she was not yet an abolitionist, and she felt that violent agitators were taking upon themselves a serious risk in bringing the Nation to the very brink of bloodshed. She did not approve of the John Brown raid, and she was greatly concerned about the meetings that were held that seemed to her calculated to induce riot. She had her convictions, and was never afraid to speak them boldly, but she said, "It will be a strange pass when the Bartons get fanatical, and cannot abide by and support the laws they live under." A neighbor who had been with Stephen in Carolina was driven away on account of utterances that followed the John Brown raid. She wrote to her brother Stephen at this time — the letter is not dated — and gave the fullest account of her own feelings

and convictions concerning the issues then before the country, having in special mind the duty of Northern people resident in the South to be considerate of the conditions under which Southern people had to live. It is a very interesting letter, and the author of this volume could wish that it had been in his possession while Clara Barton was living, that he might have asked her to what extent her views changed in the years that followed:

I have not seen Mr. Seaver since his return, and regret exceedingly that there should have been any necessity for such a termination to his residence in the South. I should not have supposed that he would have felt it his *duty* to uphold such a cause as "Harper's Ferry," and if he *did* not, it is a pity he had the misfortune to make it appear so. Of course I could not for a moment believe him a dangerous man, hostile to either human life, rights, or interests, or antagonistic to the community among whom he resided, but if *they* felt him to be so, I do not by any means blame them for the course they took. Situated as they are, they have a *right* to be cautious, and adopt any measures for safety and quiet which their own judgment may suggest. They have a right even to be *afraid*, and it is not for the North, who in no way share in the danger, to brand them as cowards; they are the same that people the world over are and would be under the circumstances. Unorganized men *everywhere* are timid, easy and quick to take alarm. It is only when bodies of men are organized and disciplined, and prepared to defend themselves against *expected* dangers, that they stand firm and unshrinking, and face death unmoved. Occasionally we hear that *you* have been or will be requested to leave — this *amuses me*. It would be singular, indeed, if in all this time your Southern friends had not learned *you* well enough to tolerate you. It will be a strange pass when the *Bartons* get fanatical,



and cannot abide by and support the laws they live under, and mind their own business closely enough to remain anywhere they may chance to be. I am grieved and ashamed of the course which our Northern people have taken relative to the John Brown affair. Of their relief societies, and mass meetings and sympathetic gatherings, I can say nothing, for I have never witnessed one, and never shall. From the first they seemed to me to be wrong and ill-advised, and had a strained and forced appearance; and the longer they are persisted in, and the greater extent to which they are carried, the more ridiculous they become in my sight. If they represented the true sentiments and feeling of the majority of candid thinking men at the North, it would savor more of justice, but this I believe to be very far from the facts. Their gatherings and speechifyings serve the purpose of a few loud-mouthed, foaming, eloquent fanatics, who would be just as ready in any other cause as this. They preach for notoriety and oratorical praise, fearlessly and injudiciously, with characters long stamped and nothing to lose. It matters little to them that every rounded sentence which falls from their chiseled lips, every burst of eloquence which "brings down the house," drives home one more rivet in slavery's chain; if slavery be an evil, they are but helping it on; it is only human nature that it should be so, and so plain a fact "that the wayfaring man cannot err therein." Nature, and cause and effect, are, I suppose, much the same the world over, and if our Southern neighbors clasp their rights all the firmer, when assailed, and plant the foot of resistance toe to toe with the foot of aggression, it is not for *us* to complain of it; what differently should we ourselves do? That slavery be an evil I am neither going to affirm nor deny; let those pass judgment whom greater experience and observation have made capable of judging; but allowing the affirmative in its most exaggerated form, could it *possibly* be equal to the pitiful scene of



confusion, distrust, and national paralysis before and around us at the present hour, with the prospect of all the impending danger threatening our vast Republic? Men talk flippantly of dissolving the Union. This may happen, but in my humble opinion never till our very horses gallop in human blood.

But I must hold or I shall get to writing politics to you, and you might tell me, as old Mr. Perry of New Jersey did Elder Lampson when he advised him to leave off drinking whiskey and join the Temperance Society. After listening long and patiently until the Elder had finished his remarks, he looked up very, very benignly with, "Well, Elder, your opinions are very good, and probably worth as much to yourself as anybody."

Lincoln was elected and duly inaugurated. Clara heard the inauguration address and liked it. She witnessed nothing in the ceremony of inauguration which seemed immediately threatening. So far as she could discover, no one present had any objection to permitting the new President to live. There were rumors that Eli Thayer, of Worcester, who had done more than any other man to make Kansas a free State, was to be Commissioner of Patents. That was delightful news for her. It meant not only an assured position, but an opportunity of service undisturbed by needless annoyances. She had an invitation to the inauguration ball, but had to decline that dreary function on account of a cold. On the day following the inauguration, she wrote to Annie Childs, sister of Frances, her account of the day's events:

WASHINGTON CITY, March 5th, 1861

MY DEAR ANNIE:

I have just a few minutes before dinner for which I have no positive call, and I am going to inflict them on you. Of course you will not expect an elaborate letter,

for I by no means feel competent to the task to-day if I had the time.

The 4th of March has come and gone, and we have a *live Republican* President, and, what is perhaps singular, during the whole day we saw no one who appeared to manifest the least dislike to his living. We had a crowd, of course, but not so utterly overwhelming as had been anticipated; everywhere seemed to be just full, and no more, which was a very pleasant state of affairs. The ceremony was performed upon the East Capitol steps facing Capitol Hill, you remember. The inaugural address was first delivered in a loud, fine voice, which was audible to many, or a majority of the assemblage. Only a very few of the United States troops were brought to the Capitol at all, but were in readiness at their quarters and other parts of the city; they were probably not brought out, lest it look like menace. Great pains appeared to be taken to avoid all such appearances, and indeed a more orderly crowd I think I never saw and general satisfaction expressed at the trend and spirit of the Address. Of course, it will not suit your latitude quite as well, but I hope they may find it endurable.

It is said that the Cabinet is formed and has been or will be officially announced to-day. And there is some prospect of the Honorable Eli Thayer being appointed Commissioner of Patents. Only think of it! Is n't it nice if it is true? Mr. Suydam has been spending the week with us; left this morning. Mrs. Suydam is better, he says. Mr. Starr is here.

We have had the most splendid spring weather you ever saw for two weeks past, no rain, but bright sunshine; it has been frightfully dusty some of the time and this day is one apparently borrowed from Arabia, by the clouds of sand.

I hear from you sister sometimes, but not until I have almost lost trace of her each time, but I am, of course, most to blame. I hope your business has revived with

the approach of spring, as it doubtless has. You will not be surprised if I tell you that I am in a hopeless state of semi-nudity, just clear the law and nothing more. Sally told me on her return that you would have come out and stayed with us some this winter if you had thought it could have been made to pay, but as usual I knew nothing of this until it was too near spring to think of your leaving your business. How glad I should have been to have had you here a month or two, and I think I could have relieved you of the most of expense to say the least of it, if you were not doing much at home, and what a comfort it would have been to me to *get right* in the clothing line. Will there ever be another time that you would think you could leave, and come to Washington if I should remain?

Where is Fannie? Is she having a vacation now? Please give my love to her, and all inquiring friends, reserving a large share for yourself, and believe me,  
As ever, your loving friend

CLARA

Everybody would send love if they knew I were writing. I cannot report the Inauguration Ball personally, as I was not present; after a delightful invitation could not go. I have been having a very bad cold for a few days and a worse cough than I ever had, but I hope to get over it soon. I did not attend the last Levee.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM

THE unit of Massachusetts history is eighty-six years. As a considerable part of American history relates to Massachusetts, or traces its origin from there, the same unit measures much of the life of the Nation itself. It begins in the year 1603 when Queen Elizabeth died, and King James came to the throne, and the season was the spring. It was King James who determined to make the Puritans conform or to harry them out of his kingdom. He did not succeed in making them conform, but he harried the Pilgrims into Holland whence they came to Plymouth Rock. For eighty-six years Massachusetts was managed under a colonial government, whose last days were those of a province with a royal governor in control. It was on the 19th of April, 1689, that this royal governor, whose name was Andros, looked out through the port-hole of the ship on which he was a prisoner, and saw the sun rise over Boston Harbor prior to his enforced return to England. That was the end of provincial governors in New England, and the beginning of the assertion of the doctrine of independence. Eighty-six years later to a day, a little band of Massachusetts soldiers stood in a line on the green at Lexington, and on the same day a larger company mustered by the bridge in Concord, and the Revolutionary War began. Eighty-six years later to a day, the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment, hastening through Baltimore in response to President Lincoln's call for troops, was fired upon, and the first blood was



shed in a long and cruel war which did not end until it was decided that the house which was divided against itself was no longer to be divided; that this was to be one nation and that nation a free nation.

If one had been privileged to visit the Senate Chamber of the United States in three days after the assault upon the Massachusetts troops, he might have beheld an interesting sight. Behind the desk of the President of the Senate stood a little woman reading to the Massachusetts soldiers who were quartered there from their home paper, the Worcester "Spy." Washington had need of these troops. Had they and their comrades in arms arrived a few days later, the capital would have been in the hands of the Confederates. They came none too soon; Washington had no place to put them, nor was the War Department adequately equipped with tents or other supplies. The Capitol building itself became the domicile of some of the first regiments, and the Senate Chamber was the habitation of the boys from Worcester County. A few of the boys Clara Barton knew personally.

Already the war had become a reality to these Yankee lads. Lincoln's call for men was issued on April 15, 1861. Massachusetts had four regiments ready. The first of these reached Baltimore four days after the President's Proclamation. Three men were killed by a mob, and thirty were injured as they marched through Baltimore. The regiment fought its way to the station, regained possession of their locomotive and train, and moved on to Washington.

Clara Barton's first service to the soldiers was only incidentally to the wounded. There were only thirty



of them, and they were adequately cared for. But she, in company with other women, visited the regiment at the Capitol, and she performed her first service to the armies of her country by reading to the homesick boys as they gathered in the Senate Chamber, and she stood in the place that was ordinarily occupied by the Vice-President of the United States. Her own account of this proceeding is contained in a letter to her friend, B. W. Childs:

WASHINGTON, April 25th, 1861

MY DEAR WILL:

As you will perceive, I wrote you on the 19th, but have not found it *perfectly convenient* to send it until now, but we trust that "navigation is open now" for a little. As yet we have had no cause for alarm, if indeed we were disposed to feel any. The city is filling up with troops. The Massachusetts regiment is quartered in the Capitol and the 7th arrived to-day at noon. Almost a week in getting from New York here; they looked tired and warm, but sturdy and brave. Oh! but you should hear them praise the Massachusetts troops who were with them, "Butler's Brigade." They say the "Massachusetts Boys" are equal to anything they undertake — that they have constructed a railroad, laid the track, and built an engine since they entered Maryland. The wounded at the Infirmary are all improving — some of them recovered and joined the regiment. We visited the regiment yesterday at the Capitol; found some old friends and acquaintances from Worcester; their baggage was all seized and they have *nothing* but their heavy woolen clothes — not a cotton shirt — and many of them not even a pocket handkerchief. We, of course, emptied our pockets and came home to tear up old sheets for towels and handkerchiefs, and have filled a large box with all manner of serving utensils, thread, needles, thimbles, scissors, pins, buttons, strings, salves, tallow,

etc., etc., have filled the largest market basket in the house and it will go to them in the next hour.

But don't tell us they are not determined — just fighting mad; they had just one Worcester "Spy" of the 22d, and all were so anxious to know the contents that they begged me to read it aloud to them, which I did. You would have smiled to see *me* and my *audience* in the Senate Chamber of the United States. Oh! but it was better attention than I have been accustomed to see there in the old time. "Ber" writes his mother that Oxford is raising a company. God bless her, and the noble fellows who may leave their quiet, happy homes to come at the call of their country! So far as our poor efforts can reach, they shall never lack a kindly hand or a sister's sympathy if they come. In my opinion this city will be attacked within the next sixty days. If it must be, let it come; and when there is no longer a soldier's arm to raise the Stars and Stripes above our Capitol, may God give strength to mine.

Write us and tell our friends to write and I will answer when I can. Love to all.

C. H. BARTON

Several things are of interest in this letter. One is the place where her work for the soldiers began. It was the Government's poverty in the matter of tents and barracks which caused the soldiers to be quartered in the Capitol, but it was certainly an interesting and significant thing that her great work had its beginning there. Washington was still expecting to be attacked; she believed that the attack would occur shortly. It was rather a fine sentence with which her letter closed,— "If it must be, let it come; and when there is no longer a soldier's arm to raise the Stars and Stripes above our Capitol, may God give strength to mine."

She was still signing her formal letters Clara H. Barton

She was no longer Clarissa, and before very long she dropped the middle name and letter entirely, and, from the Civil War on, was simply Clara Barton.

This letter which deals entirely with her military experiences is the first of many of this general character. To a large extent personal matters from this time on dropped out of sight. It will be of interest to go back a few weeks and quote one of her letters to her brother David, in which there is no mention of political or military matters. It is a letter of no great importance in itself, but shows her concern for her father, who had partially recovered from his serious illness, for her niece Ida, her nephew Bub, as she still called Stephen E., though he was now a lad of some size, and for home affairs generally. For her father she had adopted the name given him by her nephews and nieces, and called him "Grandpa":

Feb. 2nd, 1861

DEAR BROTHER:

I enclose in this a draft for twelve dollars, and will send you another for the remaining fifteen on the first of next month, i.e., provided Uncle Sam is not bankrupt, which he nearly is now and his payments have been very irregular. I have only received a *part* of my salary for this month — *but all right in the end*. I have been very sorry that I took the money of you lest you might have wanted it when I might just as well have drawn upon *myself*, only for the trouble of getting at the Colonel. Another time I should do so, however, for I believe I am the poorest hand in all the world to owe anything. I never rest a moment until all is square. And now, if you have the *least* need of the remaining fifteen dollars just say so to the Colonel and he will honor your draft *so quick* you will never know you made it. You may want

it for something about the house, or to make out a payment, and if so don't wait, I pray you, but just call over when you get your draft changed and get the remainder of the Colonel, and tell him in that case he will hear from me very soon. Perhaps Julia or the children have wanted something, and if I have been keeping them out of any comfort I am *very sorry*.

As it is my intention to keep a strict account with myself of all my expenditures and profits from this time henceforth, you may, if you please, sign the receipt at the top of this sheet, and hand it to Sally to bring to me.

I had thought I should get a line, or some kind of word from you, perhaps, but I suppose you are too busy. Well, this is a very busy world. You will be glad to know that I am very happily situated here; the winter is certainly passing very pleasantly. I find all my old friends so numerous, and so kind, and, unless they falsify grossly, so glad to have me back among them again; I could not have believed that there was half so much kind feeling stored away for me here in this big city of comers and goers. The office and my business relations are all right, and they say I am all right too. The remainder of the winter will be very gay, and I must confess that I fear I am getting a little dissipated, not that I drink champagne and play cards, — oh, no, — but I do go to levees and theaters. I don't know that I should own up so frankly, only that I am afraid "Mr. Grover" will show me up if I try to keep still and dark. Now, if he does, just tell him that it gets no better, but rather worse if anything, and that he ought to have stayed to attend Mr. Buchanan's *big party*. It was splendid — General Scott and the military; in fact, we are getting decidedly military in this region. But we have no winter. Mr. J. S. Brown, of Worcester, came to us in the theater last night at eleven and said a dispatch from Worcester declared the snow to be six feet deep in Massachusetts. We decided to put it down at a foot and a half, and did n't know



but that was big! We could n't realize even that, for we have only now and then a little spot of snow, and this morning a monster fog has come and settled down on that, and in two hours we shall forget how snow looks, and in two days, if it does n't rain, the dust will blow; but no fears but that it will rain, though.

But I have n't said a word about Grandpa. I am so *glad* to know that he is better and even gets *into the kitchen*; that is splendid, and besides he has had *company* as well as you all. Ah, ha, I found it out, if none of you told me! Ben Porter came at last!! Please give my congratulations to Grandpa, and *you* too Julia, for I am writing to you just as much as to Dave, only I don't know as I said so before. I *forgot* to tell you — and now if you don't write me how Adeline and Viola are, I will do some awful thing to come up to you. I don't justly know what, for if Frank wrote a week he never would tell me. Oh, I had a letter from him last night; said he was over his boots in snow, was going "down east" to Bangor, Dr. Porter's, etc.

I am afraid my trunk and other things are in your way, and I would ask Sally to take the trunk, only that it seems to me that I had best wait until I see what the 4th of March brings about, and find where I am in the new administration, or at least if we have one. If we are to have a war, I have plenty of traps and trunks in this region, and if all comes right and I remain, it may be that some one will be coming South pretty soon without much baggage who would take something for me.

How are all the children? I must write to *somebody* soon; I guess it will be Bub, but Ida is n't forgotten. She was a faithful little correspondent to tell me how Grandpa was. I shall not forget it of Ida. Can she skate yet? Now, are n't you going to write me and tell me all the news? And you must remember me to Mrs. Waddington, Mrs. Aborn, and family, and, Jule, you must give my regards to Silas and Mr. Smith, for I don't wish to be



lost sight of by my old-time friends, among all the new ones here. And don't forget to give my love to Mrs. Kidder and tell me how she is. You had best clap your hands for joy that I have no more room, only to say I am  
Your affectionate sister

CLARA

I forgot to cut my draft loose until I had written on the back of it, and then I cut it loose without thinking that I had written; so much for doing things in a hurry, and I can't stop to rewrite a single word to anybody, so patch up and read if you can.

The Sixth Massachusetts left Washington and moved farther south. She tells of her feelings with regard to these men in a letter written May 19, 1861, to Annie Childs. The letter to which she referred as having been written on the same day to Frances Childs, and containing war news, has not been found:

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 19, 1861

MY DEAR ANNIE:

I am very sorry that it will be in my power to write you so little and no more, but these are the busy days which know no rest, and there are at this moment thirty unanswered letters lying by my side — besides a perfect rush of ordinary *business*, and liable to be interrupted by soldier calls any moment. I wish I could tell you something of the appearance of our city, grand, noble, true, and brave. I wish you could see it just as it is, and if it were not that at this season of the year I had no thought that you could leave your business, I would say to you come, — and indeed I will say this much, hopeless as I deem it, aye, *know* it to be, — but this, — if you have the least curiosity to witness the events of our city as they are transpiring or enough so that you could come, you shall be doubly welcome, have a quiet nook to stay in, and I will find you all you want to do while you will stay,

longer or shorter, and pay you all you ask for your services. If it were winter I should *hope* you would think well enough of it to come, but at this season of the year, I dare not, but rest assured nothing would please me as much, and Sally too. We often wish you would come, and I am in a most destitute condition. I cannot get a moment to sew in and can trust no one here. I know I must not urge you, but only add that I mean just what I say. If you care to come, you shall not lose your time, although I feel it to be preposterous in me to say such a thing at this time of the year, but I have said it at a venture and cannot retract. I saw your friend Mr. Parker before he left the city for the Relay House, and we had a long talk about you. I had never met him before, but was much pleased with his easy, pleasant manners and cordial ways. Allow me to congratulate you upon the possession of such friends.

For war news I must refer you to a letter I have written *your sister* to-day; she will show it to you.

I was sorry when the Sixth Regiment left us, but nothing could have delighted them more than the thought of nearing Baltimore again, and how successfully they have done it. I wept for joy when I heard of it all, and they so richly deserved the honor which is meted out to them — *noble old regiment they*; every one admires, and no one envies; there seems to be no jealousy towards them, all yield the precedence without a word, and *their governor!* I have no words *good enough to talk about him with*. Will this little scrap be better than nothing from your

Loving Coz

CLARA

I have not forgotten my debt, but have nothing small enough to enclose. I will pay it.

How deeply stirred Clara Barton was by the events, which now were happening thick and fast, is shown by a

portion of a letter in which she describes the funeral of Colonel Elmer Ellsworth. The death of this young man affected the Nation as that of no other who perished in the early days of the war. When Alexandria, which was practically a suburb of Washington, was occupied by the Federal troops, this young soldier was in command. After the troops had taken possession of the town, the Confederate flag was still flying from the roof of the hotel. Ellsworth ascended the stairs, tore down the flag, and was descending with it when he was shot by the proprietor of the hotel. Elmer Ellsworth was a fine and lovable man, and had been an intimate friend of President Lincoln in whose house he lived for a time. His theory of military organization was that a small body of men thoroughly disciplined was more effective than a large body without discipline. The Zouaves were largely recruited from volunteer fire companies. They were soldiers expert in climbing ladders and in performing hazardous deeds. Their picturesque uniform and their relatively high degree of discipline, as well as the death of their first commander, attracted great attention to them. Just after the funeral of Colonel Ellsworth, whose death Lincoln mourned as he would have mourned for a son, Clara Barton wrote a letter containing this description of his funeral:

Our sympathies are more enlisted for the poor bereaved *Zouaves* than aught else. They who of all men in the land most *needed* a leader and *had* the best — to lose him now in the very beginning; if they commit excesses upon their enemies, only their enemies are to blame, for they have killed the only man who ever *thought* to govern them, and now, when I read of one of them breaking over and committing some trespass and is called to account

and punished for it, my blood rises in an instant. I would not have them punished. I know I am wrong in my conclusions, and do not desire to be justified, but I am not accountable for my feelings. The funeral of the lamented Ellsworth was one of the most imposing and touching sights I ever witnessed or perhaps ever shall. First those broad sidewalks from the President's to the Capitol, two impossible lines of living beings, then company after company and whole regiments of sturdy soldiers with arms reversed, drums muffled, banners furled and draped, following each other in slow, solemn procession, the four white horses and the gallant dead, with his Country's flag for a pall; the six bearers beside the hearse, and then the little band of Zouaves (for only a part could be spared from duty even to bury their leader), clad in their plain loose uniform, entirely weaponless, heads bowed in grief, eyes fixed on the coffin before them, and the great tears rolling down their swarthy cheeks, told us only too plainly of the smothered grief that would one day burst into rage and wreak itself in vengeance on every seeming foe; the riderless horse, and the rent and blood-stained Secession flag brought up the rear of the little band of personal mourners; then followed an official "train" led by the President and Cabinet — all of whom looked small to us that day; they were no longer dignitaries, but mourners with the throng. I stood at the Treasury, and with my eye glanced down the Avenue to the Capitol gate, and not one inch of earth or space could I see, only one dense living, swaying, moving mass of humanity. Surely it was great love and respect to be meted out to the memory of one so young and from the common ranks of life. I thought of it long that day and wondered if he had not sold himself at his highest price for his Country's good — if the inspiration of "*Ellsworth dead*" were not worth more to our cause than the life of *any* man could be. I could not tell, but He who knows all things and ruleth all in wisdom hath done all things well.



How deeply she felt the sorrow of the soldier, and the anxiety of his loved ones at home, is shown in a letter which she wrote in June before there had been a decisive battle, but while the boys were rallying to the flag, "Shouting the Battle Cry of Freedom." The most of her letters of this period are descriptive of events which she witnessed, but this one is a meditation on a Sunday afternoon while the Nation was waiting for a great battle which every one felt was impending:

WASHINGTON, June 9th, 1861  
Sunday afternoon

MY DEAR COUSIN VIRA:

We have one more peaceful Sabbath, one more of God's chosen days, with the sun shining calmly and brightly over the green, quiet earth as it has always looked to us; the same green fields, and limpid waters; and but that the long lines of snow-white tents flashed back the rays I might forget, on such an hour as this, the strange confusion and unrest that heaves us like a mighty billow, and the broad, dark, sweeping wing of war hovering over our heads, whose flap and crash is so soon to blacken our fair land, desolate our hearths, crush our mothers' sacrificing hearts, drape our sisters in black, still the gleesome laugh of childhood, and bring down the doting father's gray hair with sorrow to the grave. For however cheerfully and bravely he has given up his sons and sent them out to die on the altar of Liberty, however nobly and martyr-like he may have responded, they are no longer "*mine*" when their Country calls. Still has he given them up in hope,— and somewhat of trust,— that one day his dim eyes shall again rest on that loved form, his trembling voice be raised and his hand rest in blessing on the head of his darling soldier boy returned from the wars; and when he shall have sat and waited day by day, and trained his time-worn ear to catch the faintest, earliest lisp of tidings, and strained his failing eye, and



cleared away the mist to read over day by day "the last letter," until its successor shall have been placed in his trembling hands to be read and blotted in its turn; and finally there shall come a long silence, and then another letter in a strange handwriting — then, and not till then, shall the old patriot know how much of the great soul strength, that enabled him to bear his cherished offering to the altar, was loyalty, patriotism, and principle, and how much of it was hope.

The battle of Bull Run was fought on Sunday, July 21, 1861. Clara Barton witnessed the preparations for it, and saw its results. The boys marched so bravely, so confidently, and they came back in terror leaving 481 killed, 1011 wounded, and 1460 missing. The next night she began a letter to her father, but stopped at the end of the first page, and waited until near the end of the week before resuming. Unfortunately, the latter part of this letter is lost. She undertook to give somewhat in detail a description of the battle, and what she saw before it and after. That part of the letter which has been preserved is as follows:

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 22nd, 1861  
Monday evening, 6 o'clock, P.M.

MY DEAR FATHER:

It becomes my painful duty to write you of the disaster of yesterday. Our army has been unfortunate. That the results amount to a *defeat* we are not willing to admit, but we have been severely repulsed, and our troops returned in part to their former quarters in and around the city. This has been a hard day to witness, sad, painful, and mortifying, but whether in the aggregate it shall sum up a defeat, or a victory, depends (in my poor judgment) entirely upon circumstances; viz. the tone and spirit in which it leaves our men; if sad and disheartened, we are defeated, the worst and sorest of defeats; *if roused*

*to madness, and revenge*, it will yet prove VICTORY. But *no mortal* could look in upon this scene to-night and judge of effects. How gladly would I close my eyes to it if I could. I am not fit to write you now, I shall do you more harm than good.

July 26th, Friday noon

You will think it strange that I *commenced* so timely a letter to you and stopped so suddenly. But I did so upon more mature reflection. You could not fail to know all that I could have told you so soon as I could have got letters through to you, and everything was *so* unreliable, vague, uncertain, and I confidently hoped exaggerated, that I deemed it the part of prudence to wait, and even now, after all this interval of time, I cannot tell you with certainty and accuracy the things I would like to. It is certain that we have at length had the "*Forward Movement*" which has been so loudly clamored for, and I am a living witness of a corresponding *Backward* one. I know that our troops continued to go over into Virginia from Wednesday until Saturday, noble, gallant, handsome fellows, armed to the teeth, apparently lacking nothing. Waving banners and plumes and bristling bayonets, gallant steeds and stately riders, the roll of the drum, and the notes of the bugle, the farewell shout and martial tread of armed men, filled our streets, and saluted our ears through all those days. These were all noble sights, but to *me* never pleasant; where I fain would have given them a smile and cheer, *the bitter tears would come*; for well I knew that, though the proudest of victories perch upon our banner, many a brave boy marched down to die; that, reach it when, and as they would, the Valley of Manassas was the Valley of Death.

Friday brought the particulars of Thursday's encounter. We deplored it, but hoped for more care, and shrewder judgment next time. Saturday brought rumors of *intended* battle, and most conflicting accounts of the

enemy's strength; the evening and Sunday morning papers told us reliably that he had eighty thousand men, and constantly reënforced. My blood ran cold as I read it, lest our army be deceived; but then they *knew* it, the news came from them; surely they would never have the madness to attack, from open field, an enemy of three times their number behind entrenchments fortified by batteries, and masked at that. No, this *could not be*; then we breathed freer, and thought of all the humane consideration and wisdom of our time-honored, brave commanding general, that he had never needlessly sacrificed a man.

Clara Barton went immediately to the Washington hospitals to render assistance after the battle of Bull Run. But it did not require all the women in Washington to minister to a thousand wounded men. Those of the wounded who got to Washington were fairly well cared for; but two things appalled her, the stories she heard of suffering on the part of the wounded before they could be conveyed to the hospitals, and the almost total lack of facilities for the care of the wounded. She thought of the good clean cloth in New England homes that might be used for bandages; of the fruits and jellies in Northern farm homes which the soldiers would enjoy. She began advertising in the Worcester "Spy" for provisions for the wounded. She had immediate responses, and soon had established a distributing agency.

I am very glad to have first-hand testimony as to the establishment which she now set up. Mrs. Vassall, who, as Miss Frances Maria Childs, had been her assistant teacher in Bordentown, has described the home of Clara Barton during the Civil War. She said:

The rooms she took were in a business block. It was

not an ideal place for a home-loving woman. Originally there had been one large room, but she had a wooden partition put through, and she made it convenient and serviceable. She occupied one room and had her stores in the other. It was a kind of tent life, but she was happy in it and made it a center from which she brought cheer to others.

Before the end of 1861 the Worcester women had begun to inquire whether there was any further need of their sending supplies to her. They had sent so much, they thought the whole army was provided for, and for the period of the war. We have her letter in reply:

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 16, 1861

MRS. MILLER, Sec.,  
Ladies' Relief Committee,  
Worcester, Mass.

DEAR MADAM:

Your letter, mailed to me on the 11th, came duly to hand at a moment when I was *more* than busy, and, as I had just written Mrs. Dickens (of whom I received the articles) a detailed account of their history and final destination, I have ventured with much regret to allow your letter to remain unanswered for a day, that I might find time to write you at greater length. You must before this have learned from my letter to Mrs. D. the occasion of the delay (*viz.*, uncertain orders, rainy weather, and Maryland roads), and decided with me that the (anxious) package has long before this accomplished its mission of charity and love. The bundles were all packed together in a stout box, securely nailed, and given to the sutler of the 15th Regiment, who promised to deliver them safely at Headquarters. I have no doubt but it has all been properly done. A box for the 25th I had delivered to Captain Atwood's Company, and heard with much satisfaction the gratification it afforded the various recip-



ients. The men were looking splendidly, and I need not tell you that the 25th is a "*live*" regiment from its *Colonel* and *Chaplain* down. Worcester County has just cause for pride.

I come now to the expressions in your excellent letter which I had all along feared,— "Are our labors needed, are we doing any good, shall we work, or shall we forbear?" From the first I have dreaded lest a sense of vague uncertainty in regard to matters here should discourage the efforts of our patriotic ladies at home; it was this fear and only this which even gave me courage to assemble the worthy ladies of your Committee (so vastly my superiors) to confer upon a matter with which they seemed perfectly familiar, while I knew so little. And even now I scarce know how to reply. It is *said*, upon proper authority, that "our army is supplied." Well, this may be so, it is not for me to gainsay, and so far as our *New England* troops are concerned, it may be that in these days of quiet idleness they have really no pressing wants, but in the event of a battle who can tell what their necessities might grow to in a single day? They would want *then* faster than you could make. But only a *small* portion of our army, comparatively speaking, are *New England troops*,— New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri have sent their hundreds of thousands, and I greatly fear that those States lack somewhat the active, industrious, intelligent organizations at home which are so characteristic of our New England circles. I think I discern traces of this in this camp. I feel, while passing through them, that they could be better supplied without danger of enervation from luxuries. Still it is said that "our army is supplied." It is said also, upon the same authority, that we "need no nurses," either male or female, and none are admitted.

I wished an hour ago that you had been with me. In compliance with a request of my sister in this city I went to her house and found there a young Englishman, a



brother of one of their domestics who had enlisted during the summer in a regiment of Pennsylvania Cavalry. They are stationed at Camp Pierpont; the sister heard that her brother was sick, and with the energetic habit of a true Englishwoman crossed the country on foot nine miles out to his camp and back the same day, found him in an almost dying condition and begged that he be sent to her. He was taken shortly after in an ambulance, and upon his arrival his condition was found to be most deplorable; he had been attacked with ordinary fever six weeks before, and had lain unmoved until the flesh upon all parts of the body which rested hard upon whatever was under him had decayed, grown perfectly black, and was falling out; his heels had assumed the same appearance; his stockings had never been removed during all his illness and his toes were matted and grown together and are now *dropping off at the joint*; the cavities in his back are absolutely frightful. When intelligent medical attendance was summoned from the city, the verdict rendered upon examination was that his extremities were *perishing for want of nourishment*. He had been neglected until he was literally starving; too little nourishment had been taken into the system during his illness to preserve life in the extremities. This conclusion seems all the more reliable from the famished appearance which he presents. I am accustomed to see people *hungry* when recovering from a fever, but I find that hunger and starvation are two distinct conditions. He can lie only on his face with his insteps propped up with hair pillows to prevent his toes from touching the bed (for with the life engendered by food and care, sensation is returning to them), and asks only for "something to eat." Food is placed by him at night, and with the earliest dawn of day commence his bowls of broths and soups and a little meat, and he eats and begs for "more," and sleeps and eats and begs. Three of his toes are to be amputated to-day. The surgeon of the regiment comes to see him, but

had no idea of his condition; said that their assistant surgeon was killed and that it "was true that the men had not received proper care; he was very sorry." With the attention which this young man is now receiving, he will probably recover, but had it been otherwise? Only thus, that not far from this time the city papers under caption of "Death of Soldiers" would have contained the paragraph — "Benjamin (or Berry) Pollard, *private*, Camp Pierpont," and this would have been the end. Whoever could have mistrusted that this soldier had *starved to death* through lack of proper attendance? Ah, me, all of our poor boys have not a sister within nine miles of them. And still it is said, upon authority, "*we have no need of nurses*" and "*our army is supplied.*" How this can be so I fail to see; still again it is not for me to gainsay. We are *loyal* and our authority must be respected, though our men perish. I only mention such facts as come under my own observation, and only a fraction of those. This is not by any means in accordance with our home style of judging. If we New England people saw men lying in camp uncared for until their toes rotted from their feet, with not persons enough about them to take care of them, we should think they needed *more* nurses; if with plenty of persons about who failed to care for them we should think they needed *better*. I can only repeat that I fail to see clear. I greatly fear that the few privileged, elegantly dressed ladies who ride over and sit in their carriages to witness "splendid services" and "inspect the Army of the Potomac" and come away "delighted," learn very little of what lies there under canvas.

Since receiving your letter I have taken occasion to converse with a number of the most intelligent and competent ladies who are or have been connected with the hospitals in this city, and all agree upon one point, viz., that *our army cannot afford* that our ladies lay down their needles and fold their hands; if their contributions

are not needed just to-day, they may be to-morrow, and *somewhere* they are needed to-day. And again all agree in advising that whatever be sent be gotten as nearly direct as possible from the hands of the donors to the very spot for which it is designed, not to pass through too general distribution, strengthening their advice by many reasons and circumstances which I do not feel at liberty to lay before you. No one can fail to perceive that a house of general receipts and distribution of stores of all descriptions from the whole United States must be a mammoth concern, abounding in confusion which always involves loss and destruction of property. I am confident that this idea cannot be incorrect, and therefore I will not hesitate to advance it upon my own responsibility, viz., that every State should have, in the vicinity of her greatest body of troops, a *dépôt* of her own where all her contributions should be sent and dispersed; if her own soldiers need it all, to them; if not, then let her share generously and intelligently with those who do need; but know what she has and what she gives. We shall never have any other precise method of discovering the real *wants* of our soldiers. When the *storehouse* of *any* State should be found empty, it would be safe to conclude that her troops are in need; then let the full garners render the required assistance. This would systematize the whole matter, and do away with all necessary confusion, doubt, and uncertainty; it would preclude all possibility of loss, as it would be the business of each house to look to its own property. There is some truth in the old maxim that "what is everybody's business is nobody's business." I believe that as long ago as the early settlement of our country it was found that the plan, general labor, general storehouse, and general distribution, proved ineffective and reduced our own little colony to a state of confusion and almost ruin; there were one hundred persons then, one hundred thousand now. If, pecuniarily I were able, Massachusetts should have her *dépôt* in this city and I

should have no fear of unreliability; this to me would be no experiment, for however dimly and slowly I discern *other* points, *this* has been clear to me from the first, strengthened by eight months' daily observation.

While I write another idea occurs to me,— has it been thought of to provide each of our regiments that are to accompany the next expedition with some strong, well-filled boxes of useful articles and stores, which are not to be opened until some battle, or other strong necessity renders supplies necessary. These necessities are sure to follow, and, unless anticipated and guarded against, no activity on the part of friends at home can prevent the suffering which their absence will create. With regard to our 23d, 25th, and 27th Regiments, I cannot speak, but our 21st I *know* have no such provisions, and will not have unless thought of at home, and the consequence of neglect will be that by and by our very hearts will be wrung by accounts of our best officers and dearest friends having their limbs amputated by the light of two inches of tallow candle in the midst of a battle, and pitchy darkness close down upon men bleeding to death, or since essaying to stanch their wounds with husks and straw.

A note just now informs me that our four companies of surgeons from Fort Independence, now stationed at the arsenal in this city (some two miles from me), in waiting for their supplies from Boston, were compelled to sleep in low, damp places with a single blanket and are taking severe colds and coughing fearfully. My ingenuity points no way of relief but to buy sacking, run up many ticks to be filled with hay to raise them from the drafts a little, and to this the remainder of my day must be devoted; they are far more exposed than they would be on the ground under a good tent. I almost envy you ladies where so many of you can work together and accomplish so much, while my poor labors are so single-handed. The future often looks dark to me, and it seems sometimes that the smiles of Heaven are almost with-



drawn from our poor, rent, and distracted country; and yet there is everything to be grateful for, and by no means the least is this strangely mild winter.

But I must desist and crave pardon for my (perhaps unpardonably) long letter, for if you have followed me thus far, and especially at comparatively as rapid a rate as I have written, you must be weary. I did not intend to say so much, but let my interest be my apology. And with one more final word in answer to your rational question I have done. Ladies, remember that the call for your organized efforts in behalf of our army was *not* from any commission or committee, but from Abraham Lincoln and Simon Cameron, and when they no longer need your labors they will tell you.

But all this preliminary work bore in upon the mind of Clara Barton two important truths. The first was a necessity for organization. People were ready to give if they knew where to give and how their gifts would be made effective. The problem was one of publicity, and then of effective organization for distribution. But the other matter troubled her yet more. Supplies distributed from Washington and relief given to men there reached the wounded many hours or even days after the beginning of their needs. What was required was not simply good nurses in hospitals and adequate food and medicine for the soldiers who were conveyed thither, but some sort of provision on the battle-field itself. In later years she described her own misgivings as she considered the kind of service that ought to be rendered, and of the difficulties, including those of social duties, which might stand in the way:

I was strong and thought I might go to the rescue of the men who fell. The first regiment of troops, the old 6th



Massachusetts that fought its way through Baltimore brought my playmates and neighbors, the partakers of my childhood; the brigades of New Jersey brought scores of my brave boys, the same solid phalanx; and the strongest legions from old Herkimer, brought the associates of my seminary days. They formed and crowded around me. What could I do but go with them, or work for them and my country? The patriot blood of my father was warm in my veins. The country which he had fought for, I might at least work for, and I had offered my service to the Government in the capacity of a double clerkship at twice \$1600 a year, upon discharge of two disloyal clerks from its employ — the salary never to be given to me, but to be turned back into the United States Treasury, then poor to beggary, with no currency, no credit. But there was no law for this, and it could not be done, and I would not draw salary from our Government in such peril, so I resigned and went into direct service of the sick and wounded troops wherever found.

But I struggled long and hard with my sense of propriety — with the appalling fact that I was only a woman whispering in one ear, and thundering in the other, the groans of suffering men dying like dogs, unfed and unsheltered, for the life of every institution which had protected and educated me!

I said that I struggled with my sense of propriety and I say it with humiliation and shame. I am ashamed that I thought of such a thing.

The thing that became increasingly plain to Clara Barton was that every hour that elapsed after a man was wounded before relief reached him was an hour on which might easily hang the issues of life and death. Somehow she must get relief to men on the battle-field itself.

In later years people used sometimes to address her in

terms which implied that she had nursed with her own hands more soldiers than any other American woman who labored in military hospitals; that her hands had bound up more wounds than those of other nurses and sanitary leaders. She always tried to make it plain that she put forth no such claim for herself. Her distinctive contribution to the problem was one of organization and distribution, and especially of the prompt conveyance of relief to the places of greatest need and of greatest danger. In this she was soon to organize a system, and, indeed, had already effected the beginning of an organization which was to constitute her distinctive work in the Civil War and to lay the foundation for her great contribution to humanity, the American Red Cross.

## CHAPTER XII

### HOME AND COUNTRY

THE family 'and home life of Clara Barton occupy of necessity a smaller place in this narrative than they rightfully deserve. Reference has been made in the early pages of this work to Clara Barton's advent into a home which for several years had believed itself complete. It must not be inferred on that account that the little late arrival was other than heartily welcome. Nor must the fact that her more than normal shyness and introspection during her childhood made her a problem be understood as indicating any lack of sympathy between her and any member of her household. On the contrary, her childhood memories were happy ones, and her affection for every member of the household was sincere and almost unbounded. Nor yet again must it be supposed that her long absences from home weaned her heart away from those who were entitled to her love. Love of family and pride of family and sincere affection for every member of the home group were manifest in all her correspondence. She left her home and went out into the world while she was still a child in her own thought and in the thought of her family. She became a teacher while she was still wearing the "little waifish" dresses of her childhood. She had to do a large part of her thinking and planning apart from the companionship of those she loved best. But she loved them deeply and sincerely. The members of her family receive only incidental mention in this narrative, and, with her advent into wider fields of service,

they must drop increasingly into the background and out of view. In order, however, that we may have in mind their incidental mention, let us here record the condition of her immediate family at the time of the outbreak of the Civil War.

Her eldest sister Dorothy, born October 2, 1804, became an invalid and died unmarried April 19, 1846, aged forty-one.

Her brother Stephen, born March 20, 1806, married November 24, 1833, Elizabeth Rich, and died in Washington, March 10, 1865, aged fifty-nine years. At the outbreak of the Civil War he was living in Hertford County, North Carolina, whither he had gone in 1854. He had established a large sawmill there, and gathered about it a group of industries which by 1861 had become the most important concern in the village. Indeed, the village itself had grown up about his enterprise, and took its name, Bartonville, from him. When the war broke out, he was past the age for military service. At the beginning of the struggle, however, he had no mind to leave the South. While he was a Union man, and every one knew it, he had been long enough in the South to appreciate the position of the Southern people and had no mind needlessly to wound their feelings. His mill, his store, his blacksmith shop, his lands, his grain, his cattle, had been accumulated by him through years of toil, and he desired to stay where he was and protect his property. He did not believe — no one believed — that the war was going to last so long. There was no service which at the beginning he could render to the Northern cause. So he remained. As the war went on, his situation grew less and less tenable, and, in time, dangerous. He sent

his helpers North, some twenty of them. They made their way amid perils and hardship, reached Washington where Clara Barton rendered them assistance, and ultimately the most of them entered the Union army. But earlier than this, in 1861 and at the beginning of 1862, his family was growing increasingly anxious about him, and very desirous, if possible, that he should get away. He was warned and threatened; at one time he suffered a night assault by a mob. Bruised and battered though he was, he fought them off single-handed and remained in the South. :

Her younger brother David, born August 15, 1808, married, September 30, 1829, Julia Ann Maria Porter, lived to the age of eighty, and died March 12, 1888. At the outbreak of the war David and Julia Barton had four children — their twin daughters Ada and Ida, born January 18, 1847, the one son, Stephen Emery, born December 24, 1848, and in 1861 a lad of twelve, and the daughter Mary, born December 11, 1851.

With her brother David, his wife Julia and his four children, Clara was in continuous correspondence. His family lived in the old home, and she kept in constant touch with them. Her sister-in-law Julia was very dear to her, and perhaps the best correspondent in the family.

Her sister Sarah, born March 20, 1811, married, April 17, 1834, Vester Vassall, and died in May, 1874. At the outbreak of the war both the children of this marriage were living. The younger son Irving, died April 9, 1865. The elder son, Bernard Barton Vassall, born October 10, 1835, married, October 26, 1863, Frances Maria Childs, and died March 23, 1894. Mrs. Vassall is still living.



With this family Clara's relations were those of peculiar intimacy. Her sister and her sister's children were very dear to her. Irving was a young man of fine Christian character, not physically strong enough to bear arms, and was in Washington in the service of the Government during the war. Bernard married Clara's dear friend and assistant at Bordentown. He was a soldier and during the war his wife Fannie lived for a considerable time in Washington.

Clara Barton's mother, Sarah or Sally Stone, born November 13, 1783, died July 10, 1851, aged sixty-eight. Her death occurred while Clara was studying at Clinton, and the expressions of solitude in Clara's diary at the time of her perplexities over her love affairs, were induced in part, though perhaps unconsciously, by her loneliness after her mother's death.

Clara's relations to her father were always those of peculiar nearness and sympathy. In her childhood he was more constantly her companion than her mother ever was. When Clara was away from home, nothing more surely gave her concern than news from her brother or sister that "father," or from her nieces and nephews that "grandpa," was not as well as usual. Her diaries and her letters are burdened with her solicitude for him. In the latter part of 1861 his health gave occasion for some concern, but he seemed to recover. She made a journey to Worcester and Oxford in December, but returned to Washington before Christmas, taking with her boxes and trunks of provisions for the soldiers which she wished to deliver if possible at Arlington, so as to be closer to the place of actual need. Her nephew, Irving Vassall, was with her on the return journey. The letter

which preserves the account of this expedition is interesting as recording her account of a Sunday spent with the army. What took her there was her determination to deliver her goods to the place of need before she returned to her home in Washington. She was still learning military manners and the ways of camp life, and was giving herself unsparingly to the collection of supplies. She was assisting in hospital work in Washington, and definitely planning to have a hospital there assigned to herself. As yet, apparently, she had no definite plan to go herself directly to the battle-field.

November and the early part of December were mild. Day by day she thanked God for every ray of sunshine, and night by night she lifted up her heart in thanksgiving that the boys, who were sleeping on the bare ground with only single threads of white canvas above them, were not compelled to suffer from the rigors of cold. On December 9, 1861, she wrote the following which was a kind of prayer of thanksgiving for mild weather:

December 9, 1861

The streets are thronged with men bright with tinsel, and the clattering hoofs of galloping horses sound continually in our ears. The weather is bright and warm as May, for which blessing I feel hourly to thank the great Giver of all good gifts, that upon this vast army lying like so many thousand herds of cattle on every side of our bright, beleaguered city, with only the soil, for which they peril life, beneath, and the single threads of white canvas above, watching like so many faithful dogs, held by bonds stronger than death, yet patient and uncomplaining. A merciful God holds the warring, pitiless elements in his firm, benignant grasp, withholds the rigors of early winter, and showers down upon their heads the genial rays

of untimely warmth changing the rough winds of December to the balmy breezes of April. Well may we hold thanksgiving and our army unite in prayer and songs of praise to God.

Her diary at this period is irregular, and I have not yet discovered a definite record of her journey from Washington and back, except in her letter to the wife of an army surgeon, which she wrote on the day before Christmas, 1861:

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 24th, 1861

MY DARLING COUSIN:

How naughtily I have neglected your cheering little letter, but it has been all my hands and none my heart which have done the naughty thing. I have wanted so to write you all the time, and intruders *would* come between us and would have all my time. It was not always people. Oh, no,—work and care, and an o'ergrown correspondence intruded upon me, but I always solace myself with the thought that, if my friends will only have a *little patience* with me, it will all come right, and their turn will come at last, and after a time the best of them learn me, and then in my easy, hurrying, slipshod way we come to be correspondents for aye. In the course of a year I say a great deal of nonsense to my correspondents, but I cannot always say it when my head and heart are the fullest of it. But first let me hasten to tell you what *cannot fail of being exceedingly gratifying* to you, viz., that I am in a "*habit*" of receiving *daily visits from your husband*. But I was a long time in getting about it, however. I sent twice to his hotel, the great Pandemonium wherein he is incarcerated, before Sunday, but could get no tidings all the time. I was fearful he *was* here and I missing him, and then I was almost certain that he was *not able* to be here; but at length I could risk it no longer and wrote a hurried little note and dropped in the office

for him, and sure enough it brought him. I was so *glad* to see him and so much *better* too, it is *splendid*; but then he had been trying to find me, and I in the meantime had, along with all Washington, removed! Just think of it, but I removed out of a burden of care to perfect ease and yet can *command* just as much room as I desire in case I need, and if I have no need of it am not troubled with it — only that I have the trouble of furnishing, at which Doctor may inform you I am making very slow progress. I have so many things in Massachusetts *now* that I want; my walls are perfectly bare, not a picture, and I have plenty to furnish them. It is vexatious that I did n't "know to take them" when I was there. I fear to allow others to pack them.

I suspect that, after the daily letter of your husband, inimitable correspondent and conversationist that he is, there is nothing left for me to relate of our big city, grown up so strangely like a gourd all in a night; places which never before dreamed of being honored by an inhabitant save dogs, cats, and rats, are converted into "elegantly furnished rooms for rent," and people actually live in them with all the city airs of people really living in respectable houses, and I suspect many of them do not *know* that they are positively living in sheds, but we, who have become familiar with every old roof years ago, know perfectly well what shelters them. Well, the present aspect of our capital is a wide, fruitful field for description, and I will leave it for the Doctor; he will clothe it in a far richer dress than I could do.

Perhaps you wish to know somewhat about my journey with my big trunks. Well, it was perfectly quiet; nothing like an adventure to enliven until we reached Baltimore, to which I had checked my baggage as the nearest point to Annapolis, for which place I could not get checks, but to which I had determined to go before proceeding to Washington. I delivered my checks to the expressman, took receipts, and gave every conductor on



the train to understand that *my baggage* was to be taken through the city in the same train with myself (for we disconnect and come through Baltimore in horse-cars); but just imagine my vexation when, as our train commenced to move off, I saw my baggage just moving by slow teams *up* the street in the direction of our train. It had no checks, and I must not become long separated from it; the train was in motion and I could not leave it. I had no idea what would be done with it, whether retained in Baltimore, sent to Annapolis junction, or forwarded to Washington. I had to think fast, and you remember it was Saturday night. Relay House was the nearest station. I left the train there (Irving went on to Washington), and proceeded directly to the telegraph office and telegraphed back to Baltimore describing the baggage and directing it to come on the next train one hour later. They had just time to get it aboard, and on the arrival of the train I found it in the baggage car, took that train, and proceeded "nine miles to the junction," stopped too late for Annapolis that night, chartered the parlor and sofa, — every room in the house filled with officers, — and as good luck would have it a train (special) ran down from Annapolis the next day about eleven, for a regiment of Zouaves, and I claimed my seat, and went, too, and the first any one knew I presented myself at the Headquarters of the 21st. You will have to imagine the cordial, affable Colonel springing from his seat with both hands extended, the extremely polite Lieutenant-Colonel Maggie, always in full dress with the constantly worn sword, with eyes and hair so much blacker than night, going through a succession of bows and formalities, which *I*, a simple, home-bred, unsophisticated Yankee did n't know what upon earth to do with, completely confounded! — till the clear, appreciative, knowing twinkle of our "cute" Major Clark's eyes set things right again; and almost the last, our honest, modest "Cousin" Fletcher coming up away round on the other



side for his word, and not one among them all to whom I could extend a more cordial greeting. Please tell Grandma that he has n't broken a limb; his horse fell with him and hurt his shoulder, but it is nearly well now. I was just in time for a seat between the Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel at dinner, and accompanying them to the Chapel to listen to the opening discourse of their newly arrived chaplain, Rev. Mr. Ball, Unitarian. He addressed the men with great kindness of manner, beseeching them to come near to him with all their trials, burdens, and temptations, and let him help to bear them. He was strong to bear, patient to hear, and willing to do, and his arm, and his ear, and his heart were theirs for all good purposes. There was many a glistening eye among that thousand waiting men, still as the night of death; for a regiment of soldiers can be the stillest living thing I ever looked at. The 21st are in the main good, true men, and I was glad that a man of gentle speech and kind and loving heart had come among them.

Next morning brought some of our good Worcester ladies from the 25th to our Camp, among whom was the daughter-in-law of your neighbor Mr. Denny. A beautiful coach and span of horses were found, and a cozy, but rather gay, party of us started for the Camp of the 25th, and here we found your excellent pastor, Mr. James, the best specimen of a *true* soldier that I ever saw; nothing too vast for his mind to grasp, nothing too trivial (if needful) to interest him, cheerful, brave, and tireless, watching like a faithful sentry the wants of every soldier, and apparently more than equal to every emergency. What a small army of *such* men were sufficient to overcome all our present difficulties! You should see his tent; it was a cold, raw day, more so than any which has followed it, but the moment I was inside I found myself *so warm* and my feet grew warm as if I were standing over a register, and I could not see where the heat came from; but my curiosity was irrepressible, and I had to

ask an explanation of the mystery, — when Mr. James raised a little square iron lid, like the door of a stove (which I believe it was), almost hidden in the ground, in among the dried grass, and to my astonishment revealed a miniature volcano blazing beneath our very feet. The whole ground beneath his tent seemed to be on fire, with currents of air passing through which fed the flame, and took away the smoke. There was, of course, no dampness in the tent, and I could see no reason why it should be less healthy, or comfortable indeed (excepting small space), than any house, and such piles of letters and books and Neddy's picture over the table, and the quiet little boy, following close and looking up in his master's face, like any pet, all presented a scene which I wished his intelligent and appreciative wife, at least, could have looked in upon. Oh, yes, I must not "forget" to mention the conspicuous position which *Grandma's mittens* occupied upon the table. Mr. James put them on to show what a nice fit they were and wondered what "Grandma" would say if she were to look in upon him in his tent.

Clara Barton was still in Washington through January and apparently through February, 1862. Not always was she able to include pleasant weather among the occasions of her thanksgiving. Every now and again a pitiless storm beat down upon the soldiers, who were poorly provided with tents and blankets. Frequently she met among the soldiers in Washington some of her old pupils. She was never able to look upon armies as mere masses of troops; she had to remember that they were individual men, each capable of suffering pain in his own person, and each of them carrying with him to the front the anxious thought of loved ones at home. This was the burden of a letter which she wrote on January 9, 1862:

WASHINGTON, D.C., Jan'y 9th, 1862  
Thursday morning

MY DARLING SIS FANNIE:

In spite of everything, I shall this moment commence this note to you, and I shall finish it as soon as I can, and when it is finished, I shall send it. In these days of "Proclamations," this is mine.

I am truly thankful for the institution of ghosts, and that mine haunted you until you felt constrained to cry out for "relief" — not that I would have invoked discomfort upon you, or welcomed it when it should come, but your letter was *so* welcome, how *could* I in mortal weakness be so unselfish as not to hail with joy *any* "provoking cause"? You perceive that my idea of ghosts is not limited to graveyards and tombs, or the tenants thereof; indeed, so far from it, the most troublesome I have ever known were at times the inmates of living and moving bodies habiting among other people, coming out only occasionally like owls and bats to frighten the weak and discourage the weary. I am rejoiced to know that you are comfortable and happy, and that your school is not wearing you — you are perfectly right, never let another school be a burden of care upon you; you will do all your duty without any such soul-vexing labors. I envy you and Miss Bliss your long social intellectual evenings; please play I am there sometimes. I will be so quiet, and never disturb a bit, but, dear me, I am in rougher scenes, if in scenes at all. My head is just this moment full to aching, bursting with all the thoughts and doings of our pet expedition. A half-hour ago came to my room the last messenger from them, the last I shall have in all probability until the enemy's galling shot shall have raked through the ranks of my dear boys, and strewn them here and there, bleeding, crippled, and dying. Only think of it! the same fair faces that only a few years ago came every morning, newly washed, hair nicely combed, bright and cheerful, and took their places

quietly and happily among my scholars,— the same fair heads (perhaps now a few shades darker) that I have smoothed and patted in fond approval of some good deed or well-learned task, so soon to lie low in the Southern sands, blood-matted and tangled, trampled under foot of man and horse, buried in a common trench “unwept, uncoffined, and unknown.” For the last two weeks my very heart has been crushed by the sad thoughts and little touching scenes which have come in my way. It tires me most when one would get a few hours’ leave from his regiment at Annapolis, and come to me with some little sealed package, and perhaps his “warrant” as a non-commissioned officer, and ask me to keep it for him, either until he returns for it, or — *when I should read his name in the “Black List,” send it home.* And by the time his errand were well done, his little hour would be up and, with a hearty grasp of the hand, an earnest, deep-toned “good-bye,” he stepped from my presence, marching cheerfully, bravely out — “To die,” I said to myself, as my soul sunk within me, and the struggling breath would choke and stop, until the welcome shower of tears came to my relief. Oh, the hours I have wept alone over scenes like these, no mortal knows! To any other friend than you, I should not feel like speaking so freely of such things, but you, who know how foolishly tender my friendships are, and how I loved “my boys,” will pardon me, and not think me strange or egotistical. But I must forget myself, and tell you what the messenger said. It was simply that they were all on board; that, when he left, the harbor was full, literally crammed with boats and vessels, covered with men, shouting from every deck. At every breeze that lifted the drooping flag aloft, a shout went up that deafened and drowned every other sound, save the roar of the cannon, following instantly, drowning them in return. The...

Well, just as I knew it would be when I commenced twenty days ago to write you, some one interrupted me,



and then came the returning hours of tedious labor, and a thrice-told quantity has held me fast until now. I have been a great deal *more* than busy for the past three weeks, owing to some new arrangements in the office, mostly, by which I lead the Record, and hurry up the others who lag.

Our city has known very little change, since I commenced my first sheet, although everybody but the wise people have looked intently for something new, and desperately dreadful, some "forward movement" or backward advance, but nothing of the kind has happened, doubtless much to our credit and comfort. No private returns from the "expedition" yet, but the Commandant of the Post at Annapolis, who just left me a moment ago, says that the Baltic will leave there this P.M. to join them in their landing wherever it may be.

Colonel Allen's death was a most sad affair: his regiment was the first to embark at Annapolis, a splendid regiment 1200 strong. But a truce to wars, so here's my white flag, only I suppose you "don't see it," do you? By this time you are reveling in the February number of the "Atlantic." So am I. I have just laid down "A. C." after a hurried perusal; not equal to "Love and Skates," though; what a capital thing that is! But the "Yankee Idyll" caps all that has yet been done or said. I *cannot* lay *that* down, and keep it there; it *will* come up again, the thoughts to my mind, and the pages to my hand.

"Old Uncle S, — says he, I guess,  
God's price is high, says he."<sup>1</sup>

Who ever heard so much, so simply and so quaintly expressed? — there are at least ten volumes of good sound Orthodoxy embodied just there in that single stanza. But "Port Royal" must n't be eclipsed. The glories of that had been radiating through my mind, however, since its first appearance in the "Tribune"

<sup>1</sup> From James Russell Lowell's second series of "Biglow Papers," then appearing in the *Atlantic*.



(if that were the first; it was the first I saw of it), and I thought it so beautiful that I should n't be able to relish another poem for at least six weeks, and here it is, so soon bedimmed by a *rival*. Oh, the fickleness of human nature, and human loves, a beautiful pair they are, surmounted by the Godlike "Battle Hymn"<sup>1</sup> tossing over all. What did our poets do for subjects before the war? It's a God-send to them, I am certain, and they equally so to us; sometimes I think them the only bright spot in the whole drama.

Well, here I am at *war* again. I knew 't would be so when I signed that treaty on the previous page. I'm as bad as England; the fight is in me, and I will find a pretext.

I have not seen our North Oxford "Regulars" for some time owing to the fact that a sea of mud has lain between me and them for the last three weeks, utterly impassable. A few weeks ago Cousin Leander called me to see a member of his "mess" who was just attacked with pleuritic fever. I went, and found him in hospital. He was cheerful (a fine young man) and thought he should be out soon. Work and storm kept me from him three days, and the fourth we bought him a grave in the Congressional Burying Ground. Poor fellow, and there he lies all alone. A *soldier's* grave, a sapling at the head, a rough slab at the foot, nine shots between, and all is over. He waits God's bugle to summon him to a reënlistment in the Legion of Angels.

Well, it's no use, I've broken the peace again, and I *can't* keep it. I hope you live in a more peaceful community than I do, and are consequently more manageable and less belligerent....

CLARA

The foregoing letter dealt almost wholly with national affairs. Family matters were giving her little concern

<sup>1</sup> A reference to Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," then new.

during the twenty days in which this unfinished missive lay on her desk. But scarcely had she mailed it when she received this letter concerning her father:

NORTH OXFORD, MASS., January 13, 1862

MY DEAR CLARA:

I sat up with Grandpa last night and he requested me to write to you and tell how he was. Some one has to sit up with him to keep his fire regulated. He takes no medicine, and says he shall take *no* more. He is quite low-spirited at times, and last night very much so. Complains of pains in his back and bowels; said he should not stop long with us, and should like to see you once more before he died. He spoke in high terms of Julie and of the excellent care she had taken of him, but said after all there was no one like you. I think he fails slowly and is gradually wearing out. A week ago he was quite low; so feeble that he was unable to raise himself in bed; now he is more comfortable and walks out into the sitting-room 'most every day. He cannot be prevailed upon to go to bed, but sits in his great chair and sleeps on the lounge. When he was the sickest I notified Dr. Darling of his situation and he called. Grandpa told him his medicine did not help or hurt him. Doctor left him some drops, but said he had no confidence in his medicine and he did not think it would help him. His appetite is tolerably good for all kinds of food, and what he wants he will have. I hardly know what to write about him. I do not wish to cause unnecessary alarm, and at the same time I want you to fully understand his case. As I said before, he gets low-spirited and disconsolate, but I think he may stand by us some months longer, and yet, he may be taken away at any moment. Of course every new attack leaves him feebler and more childish. He wants to see you again and seems quite anxious about it, but whether about anything in particular he did not say. . . .

SAM BARTON

Thus, at the beginning of February, 1862, she was called back to Oxford. Her father, who had several times seemed near to death, but who had recovered again and again, was now manifestly nearing the end. She was with him more than a month before he died. His mind was clear, and they were able to converse about all the great matters which concerned them and their home and country. He made his final business arrangements; he talked with the children who were there, and about the children who were away. He was greatly concerned for Stephen, at that time shut in by the Confederate army. Even if the Northern armies could reach him, as they seemed likely to do before long, neither Clara nor her father felt sure that he would leave. There was an element of stubbornness in the Barton family, and Stephen was disposed to stand his ground against all threats and all entreaties. Clara and her father felt that the situation was certainly more serious than even Stephen could realize. To invite him to return to Oxford and sit down in idleness was worse than useless, and he could not render any military service. Not only was he too old, but he had a hernia. But she felt sure that if he were in Washington there would be something that he could do; and, as was subsequently proved, she was right about it. There were no mails between Massachusetts or Washington and the place of his residence, but Clara had opportunity to send a letter which she hoped would reach him. She wrote guardedly, for it was not certain into whose hands the letter might fall. Sitting by her father's bedside she wrote the following long epistle:

NORTH OXFORD, March 1st, 1862

MY DEAR EXILED BROTHER:

I trust that at length I have an opportunity of speaking to you without reserve. I only wish I might talk with you face to face, for in all the shades of war which have passed over us, we must have taken in many different views. I would like to compare them, but as this cannot be, I must tell you mine, and in doing so I shall endeavor to give such opinions and facts as would be fully endorsed by every friend and person here whose opinions you would ever have valued. I would sooner sever the hand that pens this than mislead you, and you may *depend* upon the *strict fact* of everything I shall say, remembering that I shall overcolor nothing.

In the first place, let me remove the one great error, prevalent among all (Union) people at the South, I presume, — viz., that this is a war of "Abolitionism" or abolitionists. This is not so; our Government has for its object the restoration of the Union *as it was*, and will do so, unless the resistance of the South prove so obstinate and prolonged that the abolition or overthrow of slavery follow as a *consequence* — never an object. Again, the idea of "*subjugation*." This application never originated with the North, nor is it tolerated there, for an instant; desired by no one unless, like the first instance, it follows as a necessity incident upon a course of protracted warfare. Both these ideas are used as stimulants by the Southern (mis)leaders, and without them they could never hold their army together a month. The North are fighting for the maintenance of the Constitutional Government of the United States and the defense and honor of their country's flag. This accomplished, the army are ready to lay down their arms and return to their homes and peaceable pursuits, and our leaders are willing to disband them. Until such time, there will be found no willingness on the part of either. We have now in the field between 500,000 and 600,000 soldiers; more cavalry



and artillery than we can use to advantage, our navy growing to a formidable size, and all this vast body of men, clothed, fed, and paid, as was never an army on the face of the earth before, perfectly uniformed, and hospital stores and clothing lying idly by waiting to be used; we feel no scarcity of money. I am not saying that we are not getting a large national debt, but I mean to say that our people are not feeling the pinchings of "war-time." The people of the North are as comfortable as you used to see them. You should be set down in the streets of Boston, Worcester, New York, or Philadelphia to-day, and only by a profusion of United States flags and occasionally a soldier home on a furlough would you ever mistrust that we were *at war*. Let the fire bells ring in any of those cities, and you will never miss a man from the crowds you have ordinarily seen gather on such occasions. We can raise another army like the one we have in the field (only better men as a *mass*), arm and equip them for service, and still have men and means enough left at home for all practical purposes. Our troops are just beginning to be effective, only just properly drilled, and are now ready to commence work in earnest or just as ready to lay down their arms when the South are ready to return to the Union, as "loyal and obedient States"; not obedient to the *North*, but obedient to the laws of the whole country. Our relations with foreign countries are amicable, and our late recent victories must for a long time set at rest all hope or fears of foreign interference, and even were such an event probable, the Federal Government would not be dismayed. We are doubtless in better condition to meet a foreign foe, along with all our home difficulties to-day, than we should have been all together one year ago to-day. Foreign powers stand off and look with wonder to see what the Americans have accomplished in ten months; they will be wary how they wage war with "Yankees" after this. I must caution here, lest you think there is in all I say



something of the spirit of "brag." There is not a vestige of it. I am only stating plain facts, and not the hundredth part of them. I do not feel exultant, but humble and grateful that under the blessing of God, my country and my people have accomplished what they have; and even *were* I exulting, it would be *for* you, and not over, or against you, for "according to the straightest of your sect," have you lived a "Yankee." And this brings me to the point of my subject; here comes my request, my prayer, supplication, entreaty, command — call it what you will, only *heed it*, at once. COME HOME, not home to Massachusetts, but home to *my* home; I want you in Washington. I could cover pages, fill volumes, in telling you all the anxiety that has been felt for you, all the hours of anxious solicitude that I have known in the last ten months, wondering where you were, or if you were at all, and planning ways of getting to you, or getting you to me, but never until now has any safe or suitable method presented itself, and now that the expedition has opened a means of escape, I am tortured with the fear that, under the recent call of the State, you may have been drafted into the enemy's service. If you are still at your place and this letter reaches you, I desire, and most sincerely advise, you to make ready, and, when the opportunity shall present (which surely will), place yourself, with such transportable things as you may desire to take, on board one of our boats, under protection of our officers, and be taken to the landing at Roanoke, and from thence by some of our transports up to Annapolis, where either myself or friends will be waiting for you, then go with me to Washington and call your days of trial over; — for so it can be done. If we could have known when General Burnside's expedition left, that it was destined for your place, Sam would have accompanied them, and made his way to you on the first boat up your river; as it is, he is coming now, hoping that he may be in time to reach you, and have your company

back. I want in some way that this and other letters reach you before he does, that you may make such preparations as will be necessary, and be ready, whenever he shall appear, to step on board and set your face toward a more peaceful quarter. You will meet a welcome from our officers such as you little dream of, unless perchance you have already met them. If you have, you have found them gentlemen and friends; you will find scores of old friends in that expedition, all anxious to see you, would do anything to serve you if you were with them, but don't know where to find you. There are some down on the Island, among General Burnside's men, who have your address, but they would scarcely be on our gun-boats. There are plenty of men there who have not only your name in their pockets, but your memory in their hearts, and would hail you with a brother's welcome. General Butler came in at Hatteras with a long letter in his possession relating to you, and if he had advanced so far, he would have claimed you. I don't know how many of our prominent Worcester men have come or sent to me for your address, to make it known among our troops if ever they reached you, that they might offer you any aid in their power. No one can bear the idea of our forces going near you without knowing all about you, and claiming and treating you as a brother; you were never as near and dear to the people of Worcester County as you are to-day. I have seen the tears roll over more than one man's face when told that Sam was going to see and take something to you, and bring you away if you would come. "God grant he may" is the hearty ejaculation which follows. I want to tell you who you will find among the officers and men composing the Expedition near you; Massachusetts has five regiments—21st, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 27th; the 21st and 25th were raised in Worcester, the former under Colonel Augustus Morse, of Leominster, formerly Major-General Morse, of the 3rd Division, State Militia; he is detached from the

regiment and is commandant (or second in command now) of the post at Annapolis. It is he who will send Sam free of cost to you. He is a good, true friend of mine, and tells me to send Sam to him, and he will put him on the track to you. He will also interest both General Burnside and Commander Goldsburgh in both of you and leave nothing undone for your comfort and interest. In the meantime he is waiting to grasp your hand, and share his table and blanket with you at Annapolis. So much for him; the other officers of the regiment are Lieutenant-Colonel Maggi, Major Clark (of Amherst College, Professor of Chemistry), Dr. Calvin Cutter as surgeon (you remember Cutter's Physiology), Adjutant Stearns, Chaplain Ball, etc. etc. all of whom know me, are my friends, and will be yours in an instant; among the men are scores of boys whom you know. You can't enter *that* regiment without a shout of welcome, unless you do it *very slyly*. Then for the 25th, Colonel Upton, of Fitchburg, Lieutenant-Colonel Sprague, of Worcester, Major Caffidy, of W., Chaplain Reverend Horace James, of the Old South, Cousin Ira's old minister, one of the bravest men in the regiment, one of my best friends, and yours too; Captain I. Waldo Denny, son of Denny the insurance agent. The Captain has been talking about you for the last six months, and if he once gets hold of you will be slow to release you unless you set your face for me; the old gentleman (his father) has been very earnest in devising plans all through the difficulties to reach, aid, or get you away as might be best. He came to me in Washington for your address and all particulars long months ago, hoping that he could reach you through just some such opening as the present. I state all this because it is due you that you should know the state of feeling held towards you by your old friends and acquaintances whether you choose to come among them or not. Even old Brine was in here a few minutes ago, and is trying to have Sam take a hundred dollars of

*his* money out to you, lest you should need it and cannot get it there; the old fellow urged it upon me with the tears running down his cheeks. There is no bitterness here, even towards the Southerners themselves, and men would give their lives to save the Union men of the South. The North feel it to be a necessity to put down a rebellion, and there the animosity ends. Now, my advice to you would be this; if you do not see fit to follow it, you will promise not to take offense or think me conceited in *presuming* to advise you; under ordinary circumstances I would not think of the thing, as you very well know. I get my privilege merely from the different standpoint I occupy. No word or expression has ever come from you, and you are regarded as a Union man closed in and unable to leave, standing by your property to guard it. This expedition is supposed to have opened the way for your safe exit or escape to your native land, friends, and loyal Government, and if now you should take the first opportunity to leave and report yourself at your own Government you would find yourself a hundred times more warmly received than if you had been here naturally, all the time. So far as lay in the power of our troops your property would be sacredly protected, far more so than if you remained on it in a manner a little hostile or doubtful. I am not certain but the best thing for Mr. Riddick would be for you to leave just in this way, and surely I would have his property harmed no more than yours. I have understood Mr. Riddick to be a Union man at heart like hundreds of other men whom our Government desires to protect from all harm and secure against all loss. This being the case, the best course for both of you which could be adopted, in my judgment, is for you to leave with our troops. This will secure the property against them; they would never harm a hair of it intentionally knowing it to belong to you, a Union man who had come away with them, and you could so represent the case of Mr. Riddick that his rights and



property would be respected by them. *He would be infinitely more secure for such a move on your part*, while his connection with you would, I trust, be sufficient to secure your property from molestation by his neighbors, who would be slow to offend or injure him. If you leave and your property be *unofficially* injured by our troops, the Federal Government must be held responsible for it, and if, after matters are settled, and business revives, you should find your attachment to your home so strong as to desire to return, I trust you could do so, as I would by no means have you do anything to weaken the goodly feeling between you and your friend, Mr. Riddick, for whom we have all learned to feel the utmost degree of grateful respect, and I cannot for a moment think that he would seriously disagree with my conclusions or advice. At all events, I am willing he should know them, or see or hear any portions of this letter which might be desired. I deal perfectly fairly and honestly with all, and I have written or said nothing that I am or shall be unwilling to have read by either side. I am a plain Northern Union woman, honest in my feelings and counsels, desiring only the good of all, disguising nothing, covering nothing, and so far my opinions are entitled to respect, and will, I trust, be received with confidence. If you will do this as I suggest and come at once to me at Washington, you need have no fears of remaining idle. This Sam will tell you of when you see him, better than for me to write so much. Washington had never so many people and so much business as now. Some of it would be for you at once.

You must not for a moment suppose that you would be offered any position which would interfere with any oath you may have given, for all know that you must have done something of this nature to have remained in that country through such times, unharmed, and all know you too well to approach you with any such request, as that you shall forfeit your word. Now, what more can



I say, only to repeat my advice, and desire you to consult Mr. Riddick in relation to the matter (if you think best) and leave the result with you, and you with the good God, whom I daily desire and implore to sustain, guide, keep, and protect you in the midst of all your trials and isolation.

I sent a short letter to you some weeks ago, which I rather suppose must have reached you, in which I told you of the failing condition of our dear old father. He is still failing and rapidly; he cannot remain with us many days, I think (this calls me home); his appetite has entirely failed; he eats nothing and can scarcely bear his weight, growing weaker every hour. He has talked a *hundred volumes* about you; wishes he could see you, knows he cannot, but hopes you will come away with Sam until the trials are ended which distress our beloved country. Samuel will tell you more than I can write.

Hoping to see you soon I remain

Ever your affectionate sister

CLARA

It was beside her father's death-bed that Clara Barton consecrated herself to work at the battle-front. She talked the whole problem over with him. She told him what she had seen in the hospitals at Washington, and that was none too encouraging. But the thing that distressed her most of all was the shocking loss of life and increase of suffering due to the transportation of soldiers from the battle-field to the base hospitals in Washington. She saw more of this later, but she had seen enough of it already to be appalled by the conditions that existed. After Fredericksburg she wrote about it in these terms:

I went to the 1st Division, 9th Corps Hospital; found eight officers of the 57th lying on the floor with a blanket

under them, none over; had had some crackers once that day. About two hundred left of the regiment. Went to the Old National Hotel, found some hundreds (perhaps four hundred) Western men sadly wounded, all on the floors; had nothing to eat. I carried a basket of crackers, and gave two apiece as far as they went and some pails of coffee; they had had no food that day and there was none for them. I saw them again at ten o'clock at night; they had had nothing to eat; a great number of them were to undergo amputation sometime, but no surgeons yet; they had not dippers for one in ten. I saw no straw in any hospital, and no mattresses, and the men lay so thick that gangrene was setting in, and in nearly every hospital there has been set apart an *erysipelas* ward.

There is not room in the city to receive the wounded, and those that arrived yesterday mostly were left lying in the wagons all night at the mercy of the drivers. It rained very hard, many died in the wagons, and their companions, where they had sufficient strength, had raised up and thrown them out into the street. I saw them lying there early this morning; they had been wounded two and three days previous, had been brought from the front, and after all this lay still another night without care, or food, or shelter, many doubtless famished after arriving in Fredericksburg. The city is full of houses, and this morning broad parlors were thrown open and displayed to the view of the rebel occupants the bodies of the dead Union soldiers lying beside the wagons in which they perished. Only those most slightly wounded have been taken on to Washington; the roads are fearful and it is worth the life of a wounded man to move him over them. A common ambulance is scarce sufficient to get through. We passed them this morning four miles out of town, full of wounded, with the tongue broken or wheels crushed in the middle of a hill, in mud from one to two feet deep; what was to be done with the moaning, suffering occupants God only knew.

Dr. Hitchcock most strongly and earnestly and indignantly remonstrates against any more removals of broken or amputated limbs. He declares it little better than murder, and says the greater proportion of them will die if not better fed and afforded more room and better air. The surgeons do *all* they *can*, but no provision had been made for such a wholesale slaughter on the part of any one, and I believe it would be impossible to comprehend the magnitude of the necessity without witnessing it.

Clara Barton knew these matters better in 1863 than she did at the beginning of 1862, but she knew something about them when she reached her father's bedside, and he entered intelligently and with sympathy into the recital of her story. He had been a soldier and he understood exactly the conditions which she described. Her old friend Colonel De Witt, formerly a member of Congress from her home district, also appreciated what she had to say. On a day when her father was able to be left, she went with Colonel De Witt to Boston to call on Governor John A. Andrew. She had much to tell him about conditions and life in the hospitals, and also something concerning leaks which she knew to be occurring in Washington and vicinity, and of treasonable organizations operating close to the capital, in constant communication with the enemy. A few days after this call the Washington papers contained an account of the arrest of twenty-five or thirty Secessionists at Alexandria, and the disclosure of just such a "leak" and plot as she had related to Governor Andrew:

Sunday Chronicle, March 2nd, 1862

Important Arrests at Alexandria. — Quite a sensation was produced in Alexandria on last Thursday evening

by the arrest of some twenty-five or thirty alleged secessionists, who are charged with being concerned in a secret association for the purpose of giving aid and comfort to the rebels. The conspiracy, it seems, was organized under the pretended forms of a relief association, and comprised all the treasonable objects of affording relief to the enemy. It is further stated that a fund was obtained from rebel sympathizers for the purpose of supporting the families of soldiers in the service of the "Confederate States," on the identical plan of the noble Relief Commission of Philadelphia, established with such different motives. It has also been engaged in the manufacture of rebel uniforms, which were distributed among the subordinate female associations. The purpose of the plotters was also to furnish arms and munitions of war. A considerable quantity has been discovered packed for shipment, consisting of knapsacks and weapons. Letters were found acknowledging the receipt through the agency of the association of rifles and pistols in Richmond....

Among the papers secured are many letters implicating persons heretofore unsuspected.

The parties were brought to this city on Friday, and lodged in the old Capital prison. As they passed along the avenue, under the guard of soldiers, they appeared to be quite indifferent as to their fate and the enormity and baseness of the crime with which they are charged. The majority of them presented a very respectable appearance, and were followed to jail by an anxious crowd of men and boys.

Clara Barton asked her father his opinion of the feasibility of her getting to the front. He did not discourage the idea. He knew his daughter and believed her capable of accomplishing what she set out to do. Moreover, he knew the American soldier. He felt sure that Clara would be protected from insult, and that her presence would be welcome to the soldiers.



Having thus been favorably introduced to Governor Andrew, and her story of the secret operations of Secessionists near Washington having been confirmed, she felt that she could write the Governor and ask him for permission to go to the very seat of war. She had been sending supplies to Roanoke, and Newbern, North Carolina, and she wished very much that, as soon as her father should have passed away, she might be permitted to go with her supplies and perform her own work of distribution. From her father's bedside she wrote the following letter to Governor Andrew:

NORTH OXFORD, Mar. 20, 1862

TO HIS EXCELLENCY JOHN A. ANDREW, Governor  
of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Governor Andrew will perhaps recollect the writer as the lady who waited upon him in company with Hon. Alexander De Witt, to mention the existence of certain petitions from the officers of the Massachusetts Regiments of Volunteers, relating to the establishment of an agency in the City of Washington.

With the promise of Your Excellency to "look after the leak" came a "lessening of my fears," and the immediate discovery of the truly magnificent rebel organization in Alexandria, and the arrest of twenty-five of the principal actors, including the *purchasing committee*, brought with it not only entire satisfaction, but a joy I had scarce known in months. Since September I had been fully conscious in my own mind of the existence of something of this kind, and in October attempted to warn our Relief Societies, but, in the absence of all proof, I must perforce *say* very little. I should never have brought the subject before you again, only that I incidentally learned that our excellent Dr. Hitchcock has taken back from Roanoke other papers relating to the same subject, which will doubtless be laid before you,



and, as I have an entirely different boon to crave, I find it *necessary* to speak.

I desire Your Excellency's permission to go to Roanoke. I should have proffered my request weeks earlier, but I am called home to witness the last hours of my old soldier father, who is wearing out the remnant of an oak and iron constitution, seasoned and tempered in the wild wars of "Mad Anthony." His last tale of the Red Man is told; a *few* more suns, and the old soldier's weary march is ended, — honorably discharged, he is journeying home.

With this, my highest duties close, and I would fain be allowed to go and administer comfort to our brave men, who peril life and limb in defense of the priceless boon the fathers so dearly won.

If I know my own heart, I have none but right motives. I ask neither pay nor praises, simply a soldier's fare and the sanction of Your Excellency to go and do with my might, whatever my hands find to do.

In General Burnside's noble command are upwards of forty young men who in former days were my pupils. I am glad to know that somewhere they have learned their duty to their country, and have come up neither cowards nor traitors. I think I am safe in saying that I possess the entire confidence and respect of every one of them. For the *officers*, their signatures are before you.

If my request appear unreasonable, and must be denied, I shall submit, patiently, though sorrowfully, but trusting, hoping better things. I beg to submit myself

With the highest respect,

Yours truly

CLARA H. BARTON

John A. Andrew was one of the great war governors. Massachusetts is one of the States that can always be proud of the record of its chief executive during the dark

days of the Civil War. He responded promptly to Clara Barton's appeal. On the day of her father's funeral she received the following letter from Governor Andrew:

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT  
BOSTON, March 24th, 1862

MISS CLARA H. BARTON,  
North Oxford, Mass.

I beg to assure you, Miss Barton, of my cordial sympathy with your most worthy sentiments and wishes; and that if I have any power to promote your design in aid of our soldiers I will surely use it. Whenever you may be ready to visit General Burnside's division I will cheerfully give you a letter of introduction, with my hearty approval of your visit and my testimony to the value of the service to our sick and wounded it will be in *your* power to render.

With high respect I am,

Your ob. servant

JOHN A. ANDREW

This letter seemed a practical assurance that Clara Barton was to be permitted to go to the front. She had the Governor's virtual promise, conditioned, of course, upon recommendations from proper authorities, and she thought she had sufficient influence with the surgeon, Dr. Hitchcock, to secure the required recommendation. Through an official friend she took up the matter with Dr. Hitchcock, but in a few days his letter to the Doctor came back to Clara by way of the Governor. Dr. Hitchcock did not believe that the battle-field was a suitable place for women. Among Clara Barton's papers the letter to Dr. Hitchcock is found bearing his comment and the Governor's brief reference with which the letter was

forwarded to Clara Barton. This closed, for the time being, her prospect of getting to the front:

BOSTON, March 22, 1862

DR. HITCHCOCK,

DEAR SIR:

A friend of mine, Miss Clara H. Barton, is very desirous of doing what she can to aid our sick and wounded men at Roanoke, or Newbern, and I to-day presented a letter from her to Governor Andrew asking that she might be sent there by the State. Governor Andrew said he would confer with you relative to the matter. I presume Miss Barton will write to you. She has been a resident of Washington and the petitions you brought for me to present to the Governor were for her appointment as an agent at Washington. She now desires to go to the Burnside expedition.

I need not say that she would render efficient service to our sick and wounded and would not be an encumbrance to the service.

Truly yours

J. W. FLETCHER

This letter bears written on its back these endorsements by Dr. Alfred Hitchcock and Governor Andrew:

I do not think at the present time Miss Barton had better undertake to go to Burnside's Division to act as a nurse.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

March 25th, 1862.

Respectfully referred for the information of Miss Barton.

J. A. ANDREW

March 25, /62.

Old Captain Stephen Barton died at last, aged almost eighty-eight. The entries in Clara Barton's diary on these days are brief and interesting:

*Thursday, March 20, 1862.* Wrote Governor Andrew, and watched by poor, suffering Grandpa. Sent a letter to Irving by the morning mail.

*Friday, March 21, 1862.* At 10.16 at night, my poor father breathed his last. By him were Misses Grover, Hollendrake, Mrs. Vial, David, Julia, and I.

*Saturday, March 22, 1862.* David and Julia went to Worcester. Mrs. Rich here. Sent letters to Irving, Judge, Mary, Dr. Darling.

*Sunday, March 23, 1862.* Call from Deacon Smith.

*Monday, March 24, 1862.* Mrs. Rich went to Worcester for me. Left a note for Arba Pierce to make a wreath for poor Grandpa's coffin.

*Tuesday, March 25, 1862.* At two P.M., commenced the services of the burial, Rev. Mr. Holmes of Charlton officiating. House and grounds crowded. Ceremony solemn and impressive. At evening Cousin Jerry Stone came and brought me a letter from Governor J. A. Andrew.

This was all she found time to write in the diary. Of the letters she wrote to her cousin, Corporal Leander A. Poor, relating to her father's death, one has been recovered:

NORTH OXFORD, March 27th, 1862  
Thursday Afternoon

MY DEAR COUSIN LEANDER:

Your welcome second letter came to me this noon — doubtless before this you have learned the answer to your kind inquiry, "How is Grandsire?" But if not, and the sentinel post is mine, I must answer, "All is well." Down under the little pines, beside my mother, he rests quietly, sleeps peacefully, dreams happily. The old soldier's heavy march is ended, for him the last tattoo has sounded, and, resting upon the unfailing arms of truth, hope, and faith, he awaits the "reveille of the eternal morning."

"Grandsire" had been steadily failing since I came

home. For more than thirty days he did not taste a morsel of food, and could retain nothing stronger or more nourishing than a little milk and water — for over ten of the last days not that, simply a little cold water, which he dared not swallow. And still he lived and moved himself and talked strongly and sensibly and wisely as you had always heard him. Who ever heard of such constitutional strength?

You will be gratified to know that he arranged all his business to his entire satisfaction some days previous to his death. After being raised up and writing his name, he said to me, "This is the last day I shall ever do any business; my work in this world is done."

He remained until Friday, the 21st [of March], sixteen minutes past ten o'clock at night. He spoke for the last time about five o'clock, but made us understand by signs until the very last, when he straightened himself in bed, closed his mouth firmly, gave one hand to Julia, and the other to me, and left us.

Clara Barton's hopes of going to the front received a severe disappointment when Governor Andrew returned Dr. Hitchcock's communication with the refusal to endorse her application. But she was nothing if not persistent. Almost immediately after her receipt of the Governor's letter, she began again seeking to bring influence to bear on a Massachusetts captain (Denney), whose wife she had come to know. In this she gives more detail of the so-called "leak" in stores, which had been sent more or less recklessly for the benefit of troops, and without the prepaying of express charges. An organization of Confederate sympathizers had been formed to purchase these goods from the express company, and slip them through the lines. In some way she had found this out, and so as to be morally certain of it before the ex-



posure and arrest of the conspirators, she had relied upon advance information that she possessed of this system to commend her to Governor Andrew, and he was, evidently, favorably impressed. But she encountered the red tape of the surgeons who were not willing that she should go to the battle-field.

No immediate results came from her continued efforts to secure permission to go to the front. She still remained in New England through the month of May, but in June returned to Washington and remained there until the 18th of July.

She had already been receiving supplies from her friends in New Jersey as well as from Massachusetts. She now went to Bordentown and from there to New York, Boston, Worcester, and Oxford. This journey was made for the purpose of ensuring a larger and continuous supply of provisions, for she had now obtained what she long had coveted, her permission to go to the front. Authority, when it finally came, was direct from the Surgeon-General's office, and it gave her as large liberty as she could well have asked. The following passes and authorizations were all issued within twenty-four hours. Just how she obtained them, we do not know. In some way her persistence triumphed over all official red tape, and when she secured her passes they were practically unlimited either as to time or destination. The following are from the official records:

SURGEON-GENERAL'S OFFICE  
July 11, 1862

Miss C. H. Barton has permission to go upon the sick transports in any direction — for the purpose of distributing comforts for the sick and wounded — and nursing

them, always subject to the direction of the surgeon in charge.

WILLIAM A. HAMMOND  
Surgeon-General, U.S.A.

SURGEON-GENERAL'S OFFICE  
WASHINGTON CITY, July 11, 1862

SIR:

At the request of the Surgeon-General I have to request that you give every facility to Miss Barton for the transportation of supplies for the comfort of the sick. I refer you to the accompanying letter.

Very respectfully

R. C. WOOD, A.S. Gen'l.

MAJOR D. H. RUCKER, A.Q.M.  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

OFFICE OF DEPOT QUARTERMASTER  
WASHINGTON, July 11, 1862

Respectfully referred to General Wadsworth, with the request that permission be given this lady and friend to pass to and from Acquia Creek on Government transports at all times when she may wish to visit the sick and hospitals, etc., with such stores as she may wish to take for the comfort of the sick and wounded.

D. H. RUCKER, Quartermaster and Col.

H'D QRS. MIL. DIV. OF VA.  
WASHINGTON, D.C., July 11, 1862

The within mentioned lady (Miss Barton) and friend have permission to pass to and from Fredericksburg by Government boat and railroad at all times to visit sick and wounded and to take with her all such stores as she may wish to take for the sick, and to pass anywhere within the lines of the United States forces (excepting to the Army of the Potomac), and to travel on any military railroad or Government boat to such points as

she may desire to visit and take such stores as she may wish by such means of transportation.

By order of Brig.-Gen'l Wadsworth, Mil. Gov. D.C.

T. E. ELLSWORTH, Capt. and A.D.C.

INSPECTOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE, ARMY OF VIRGINIA  
WASHINGTON, D.C., August 12, 1862

No. 83

To Whom it may Concern:

Know ye, that the bearers, Miss Barton and two friends, have permission to pass within the lines of this army for the purpose of supplying the sick and wounded. Transportation will be furnished by Government boat and rail.

By command of Major-General Pope

R. JONES, Asst. Inspector-General

It is said that when Clara Barton finally succeeded in getting permission to go to the front, she broke down and burst into tears. That is possible, but her diary shows no sign of her emotion. Nor is it true, as has been affirmed, that, as soon as she received her passes, she rushed immediately to the front. Her self-possession and deliberate action at this moment of triumph are thoroughly characteristic of her. Instead of going to the front, she went to New Jersey and New England, as has already been intimated. She had no intention of going to the front until she had assurance of supplies which she could take with her and could continue to receive. She was no love-lorn, sentimental maiden, going with unreckoning and hysterical ardor into conditions which she did not understand. She was forty years old, and she knew what hospitals were. She also knew a good deal about official red tape and the reasonable unwillingness of surgeons to have any one around the hospital unless

she could earn her keep. With a pocket full of passes which she now possessed, she could go almost anywhere. To be sure, it was necessary to get special passes for particular objects, but in general all she had to do was to present these blanket credentials, and particular permission for a specific journey was promptly forthcoming. Indeed, she seldom needed that when her lines of operation were definitely established, but at the beginning she took no chances. Among the other friends whom she gained while she was procuring these certificates was Assistant Quartermaster-General D. H. Rucker. He proved an unfailing friend. Never thereafter did she go to him in vain with any request for transportation for herself or her goods.

Her first notable expedition in supplies started from Washington on Sunday, August 3, 1862, just as the people were going to church. Frequent mention has been made of the fact that this occurred on Sunday, and some incorrect inferences have been drawn from it. Clara Barton had too large a conception of the sacredness of her task to have waited until Monday for a thing that needed to be done on Sunday. On the other hand, she had too much religion of her own, and too much regard for other people's religion, to have chosen deliberately the day and hour when people were going to church as that on which she would mount a loaded truck and conspicuously take her journey to the boat. She began her arrangements to go to Fredericksburg on Wednesday, July 30th, as her diary shows. But it was Friday afternoon before her arrangements were complete, including the special passes which she had to procure from General Polk's headquarters. Saturday she started, but the

boat was withdrawn, and it was due to this delay that she rode on top of her load on Sunday morning. She was taking no chances concerning her load of provisions; she knew that her welcome at the front and her efficiency there depended upon her getting her supplies there as well as herself. So she climbed over the wheel and sat beside the mule-driver as he carted her provisions to the dock. The boat conveyed her to Acquia Creek where she stayed all night, being courteously treated by the quartermaster. On Monday she went on to Fredericksburg, where she visited the general hospital, located in a woolen factory. There she witnessed her first amputation. The next day she visited the camp of the 21st Massachusetts. She distributed her supplies, and found where more were needed. Returning, she reached Washington at six o'clock Tuesday night. The next few days she had conferences with the Sanitary Commission, and suggested some improvement in the methods of supplying the hospitals.

She found the Sanitary Commission quite ready to coöperate with her, and obtained from them without difficulty some stores for the 8th and 11th Connecticut Regiments. She took time to write the story of her visit to Fredericksburg, and to secure its full value in additional supplies.

This was the way she spent her time for a full month after she secured her passes. She visited the friends who were to supply her with the articles she was to need; she visited the front and personally oversaw the method of distributing supplies; she placed herself in sympathetic relationship with the Sanitary Commission, whose work was next of kin to her own, and she wrote letters that



were to bring her a still larger volume of resources for her great work. A more businesslike, methodical, or sensible method of procedure could not be imagined than that which her diary and letters disclose.

How she felt about going to the front at this time is finely set forth in a letter to her cousin, Corporal Leander A. Poor, who was sick in a hospital at Point Lookout, Maryland, and whom she succeeded in getting transferred to a hospital in Washington. She did not expect to be there when he arrived, for she was committed to her plan of getting to the front. Not that she expected to stay continuously; it was her purpose to come and go; to get relief directly where it was needed, and to keep her lines of communication open. This letter shows that she labored under no delusion concerning the difficulties of transportation. She was going in with her eyes open.

WASHINGTON, D.C., Aug. 2, 1862  
Saturday P.M.

OH, MY DEAREST COUZ:

Can you believe it! that this afternoon's mail takes an order from the Surgeon-General for you to report in Washington (provided the state of your health will permit)? I have just seen the order written.

You are to report to Dr. Campbell, Medical Director, and he is to assign you to some hospital. Now I want you assigned near me, but am not certain that I can influence it in the least, — but I'll try! I can tell you the ropes and you can help pull them when you go to report.

At the Medical Director's, I have an especial friend in the person of Dr. Sheldon, one of the *chargés des affaires* of the Institution. I will acquaint him with the facts before your arrival either by a personal interview or a note, and then, when you go to report to Dr. Campbell, see first, if possible, Dr. Sheldon, and ask him if he

can assist you in getting assigned to some hospital near me (7th Street) or in the vicinity of the Post-Office, he knows my residence, having called upon me.

My choice would be the "Armory Square," a new hospital on 7th Street a few rods the other side of the Avenue from me, on the way to the Arsenal, you will recollect, just opposite the Smithsonian Institute, on the east side of 7th. This is designed as a model hospital, but perhaps one difficulty will be that it is intended more exclusively for extreme cases, or desperately wounded who can be conveyed but little distance from the boat. There are in it *now*, however, some very slight cases, some whom I visit every day. The chaplain, E. W. Jackson, is from Maine, near Portland, — and I would not be surprised if more Maine men were in charge there, too.

After this I have not much choice in any of the hospitals near me. E Street Church is near, and so many of the churches, and perhaps being less in magnitude they are less strict. I don't even know if you will be allowed to see me before making your report to the Medical Director, and there is one bare possibility that I may be out on a scout when you arrive. Lord knows the condition of our poor wretched soldiers down in the army; all communication cut off to and from, they must be dying from want of care, and I am promised to go to them the first moment access can be had, but this would not discourage you, for I should come home again when the poor fellows were a little comfortable.

I am not certain when you can come, probably not until some Government boat comes up; one went down yesterday, and if I had had your order *then*, I should have come for you, but to start in one now after this I might miss you, as they only go some once a week or so.

All sorts of rumors in town, — that we are whipping the rebels, they are whipping us, Jackson defeated, Pope defeated. But one thing I do suppose to be true, viz.,

that our army is isolated, cut off from supplies of food, and that we cannot reach them with more until they fight their way out. This is not generally believed or understood, but your cousin both understands and believes it. People talk like children about "*transporting supplies*" as if it were the easiest thing imaginable to transport supplies by wagon thirty miles across a country scouted by guerrilla bands. Our men *must* be on part rations, tired and hungry, fighting like tigers, and dying like dogs. There! Does n't that sound impatient. I won't speak again.

Of course you will write me instantly and tell me if you are able to come, and when as nearly as possible, etc., etc.

I will enclose \$5.00 lest you may need and not have.

Your affectionate Cousin

CLARA H. BARTON

Washington, D.C.

Thus did Clara Barton at her father's death-bed consecrate herself to a work more difficult than any woman had at that time undertaken for the relief of suffering caused by the war. Other women were equally brave; others, equally tender in their personal ministrations; but Clara Barton knew the difficulties of transportation and the awful agonies and loss of life endured by men through neglect and delay and the distance of the hospital from the battle-field. She was ready to carry relief right behind the battle lines. She had not long to wait for her opportunity.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CLARA BARTON TO THE FRONT

WHEN the author of this volume was a schoolboy, the advanced readers in the public schools partook largely of a patriotic character, and the rhetorical exercises of Friday afternoons contained recitations and declamations inspired by the great Civil War. The author remembers a Friday when he came upon the platform with his left arm withdrawn from his coat-sleeve and concealed inside the coat, while he recited a poem of which he still remembers certain lines:

My arm? I lost it at Cedar Mountain;  
Ah, little one, that was a dreadful fight;  
For brave blood flowed like a summer fountain,  
And the cannon roared till the fall of night.

Nay, nay! Your question has done me no harm, dear,  
Though it woke for the moment a thrill of pain;  
For whenever I look at my stump of an arm here,  
I seem to be living that day again.

The poem went on to relate the scenes of the battle, the desperate charge, the wound, the amputation, and now the necessity of earning a livelihood by the peddling of needles, pins, and other inexpensive household necessities. It was a poem with rather large dramatic possibilities, and the author utilized them according to the best of his then ability. Since that Friday afternoon in his early boyhood he has always thought of Cedar Mountain as a battle in which he had something of a share.

If he had really been there and had lost an arm in the manner which the poem described, one of the things he would have been almost certain to remember would have been the presence there of Clara Barton. She afterward told of it in this simple fashion:

When our armies fought on Cedar Mountain, I broke the shackles and went to the field. Five days and nights with three hours' sleep — a narrow escape from capture — and some days of getting the wounded into hospitals at Washington brought Saturday, August 30. And if you chance to feel that the positions I occupied were rough and unseemly for a *woman* — I can only reply that they were rough and unseemly for *men*. But under all, lay the life of the Nation. I had inherited the rich blessing of health and strength of constitution — such as are seldom given to woman — and I felt that some return was due from me and that I ought to be there.

The battle of Cedar Mountain, also called Cedar Run and Culpeper, was fought on Saturday, August 9, 1862. Stonewall Jackson, as directed by General Lee, moved to attack Pope before McClellan could reënforce him. The corps attack was under command of General Banks, and the Confederates were successful. The Federal losses were 314 killed, 1465 wounded, and 622 missing. News of the battle reached Washington on Monday. Clara Barton's entry for that day contains no suggestion of the heroic; no appearance of consciousness that she was beginning for herself and her country, and the civilized world, a new epoch in the history of woman's ministration to men wounded on the battle-field:

*Monday, August 11, 1862.* Battle at Culpeper reached us. Went to Sanitary Commission. Concluded to go to Culpeper. Packed goods.



The next day she went to General Pope's headquarters and got her pass, General Rucker accompanying her. The remainder of the day she spent in completing her arrangements and in conference with Gardiner Tufts, of Massachusetts, an agent sent by the State to look after Massachusetts wounded. That night she went to Alexandria, which was as far as she could get, and the next morning she resumed her journey and arrived at Culpeper at half-past three in the afternoon.

The next days were busy days. It is interesting to find in her diary that she ministered not only to the Union, but also to the Confederate wounded. For several days she had little rest. When she returned to Washington later in the month, she was not permitted to remain. She learned that her cousin, Corporal Poor, had been brought to a hospital in the city, but she was unable to visit him, being called to minister to the wounded who were being brought to Alexandria as the result of the fighting that followed Cedar Mountain. Her hastily written note is not dated, but the time is in the latter part of August, 1862:

MY OWN DARLING COUSIN:

I was almost (*all-but*) ready to come to you, and then came this bloody fight at Culpeper and the State agent for Massachusetts comes and claims me to go to Alexandria where 600 wounded are to be brought in to-day, and I may have to go on further. I hope to be back yet in time to come to you *this* week; if not I will write you.

I am distressed that I cannot come to you to-morrow as I had intended.

I hope you are as well as when I last heard. I should have written, but I thought to come so soon.

I must leave now. My wagon waits for me.

God bless you, my poor dear Cousin, and I will see you if the rebels don't catch me.

Good-bye,

Your affec. cousin

CLARA

Whether she was able to visit her cousin or not on her return from Alexandria, we do not know. Her diary for the latter part of the year 1862 ceases to be consecutive. It contains not the record of her own comings and goings, but names of wounded soldiers, memoranda of letters to write for men who had died, and other data of this character. Her entry for Saturday, August 30, 1862, is significant. It reads:

Visited Armory Hospital. Took comb to Sergeant Field, of Massachusetts 21st. On my way saw everybody going to wharf. I went.

That was her last record for more than a week. We know what was taking the people to the wharf. We know what sad sights awaited those who made their way to the Potomac. We know the sad procession that came over the long bridge; the second battle of Bull Run had been fought. After the first battle of Bull Run there was nothing she could do but stay in Washington and write her father such distracting news that she had to stop. The situation was different now; Clara Barton knew where she was needed, and she had authority to go. No time was wasted now in special passes. She had proved the value of her worth at Cedar Mountain.

That very night she was in a box car on her way to the battle-field.

Shortly after the second battle of Bull Run, Clara

Barton wrote the following account to a friend, and later revised it as a part of one of her war lectures. It is, in some respects, the most vivid of all her recitals of experiences on battle-fields:

Our coaches were not elegant or commodious; they had no windows, no seats, no platforms, no steps, a slide door on the side was the only entrance, and this higher than my head. For my manner of attaining my elevated position, I must beg of you to draw on your own imaginations and spare me the labor of reproducing the boxes, barrels, boards, and rails, which, in those days, seemed to help me up and on in the world. We did not criticize the unsightly helpers and were only too thankful that the stiff springs did not quite jostle us out. This description need not be limited to this particular trip or train, but will suffice for all that I have known in army life. This is the kind of conveyance by which your tons of generous gifts have reached the field with the precious freights. These trains, through day and night, sunshine and rain, heat and cold, have thundered over heights, across plains, through ravines, and over hastily built army bridges ninety feet across the rocky stream beneath.

At ten o'clock Sunday (August 31) our train drew up at Fairfax Station. The ground, for acres, was a thinly wooded slope — and among the trees, on the leaves and grass, were laid the wounded who were pouring in by scores of wagonloads, as picked up on the field under the flag of truce. All day they came, and the whole hillside was covered. Bales of hay were broken open and scattered over the ground like littering for cattle, and the sore, famishing men were laid upon it.

And when the night shut in, in the mist and darkness about us, we knew that, standing apart from the world of anxious hearts, throbbing over the whole country, we were a little band of almost empty-handed workers literally by ourselves in the wild woods of Virginia, with three

thousand suffering men crowded upon the few acres within our reach.

After gathering up every available implement or convenience for our work, our domestic inventory stood, two water buckets, five tin cups, one camp kettle, one stewpan, two lanterns, four bread knives, three plates, and a two-quart tin dish, and three thousand guests to serve.

You will perceive, by this, that I had not yet learned to equip myself, for I was no Pallas, ready armed, but grew into my work by hard thinking and sad experience. It may serve to relieve your apprehension for the future of my labors if I assure you that I was never caught so again.

You have read of adverse winds. To realize this in its full sense you have only to build a camp-fire and attempt to cook something on it.

There is not a soldier within the sound of my voice but will sustain me in the assertion that, go whichever side of it you will, wind will blow the smoke and flame directly in your face. Notwithstanding these difficulties, within fifteen minutes from the time of our arrival we were preparing food and dressing wounds. You wonder what, and how prepared, and how administered without dishes.

You generous thoughtful mothers and wives have not forgotten the tons of preserves and fruits with which you filled our hands. Huge boxes of these stood beside that railway track. Every can, jar, bucket, bowl, cup or tumbler, when emptied, that instant became a vehicle of mercy to convey some preparation of mingled bread and wine or soup or coffee to some helpless, famishing sufferer, who partook of it with the tears rolling down his bronzed cheeks and divided his blessings between the hands that fed him and his God. I never realized until that day how little a human being could be grateful for, and that day's experience also taught me the utter worth-



lessness of that which could not be made to contribute directly to our necessities. The bit of bread which would rest on the surface of a gold eagle was worth more than the coin itself.

But the most fearful scene was reserved for the night. I have said that the ground was littered with dry hay and that we had only two lanterns, but there were plenty of candles. The wounded were laid so close that it was impossible to move about in the dark. The slightest misstep brought a torrent of groans from some poor mangled fellow in your path.

Consequently here were seen persons of all grades, from the careful man of God who walked with a prayer upon his lips to the careless driver hunting for his lost whip — each wandering about among this hay with an open flaming candle in his hand.

The slightest accident, the mere dropping of a light could have enveloped in flames this whole mass of helpless men.

How we watched and pleaded and cautioned as we worked and wept that night! How we put socks and slippers upon their cold damp feet, wrapped your blankets and quilts about them, and when we had no longer these to give, how we covered them in the hay and left them to their rest!

On Monday (September 1) the enemy's cavalry appeared in the wood opposite and a raid was hourly expected. In the afternoon all the wounded men were sent off and the danger became so imminent that Mrs. Fales thought best to leave, although she only went for stores. I begged to be excused from accompanying her, as the ambulances were up to the fields for more, and I knew I should never leave a wounded man there if I were taken prisoner forty times. At six o'clock it commenced to thunder and lighten and all at once the artillery began to play, joined by the musketry about two miles distant. We sat down in our tent and waited to see them break in, but Reno's forces held them back. The old 21st Massa-



chusetts lay between us and the enemy and they could not pass. God only knows who was lost, I do not, for the next day all fell back. Poor Kearny, Stephen, and Webster were brought in, and in the afternoon Kearny's and Heintzelman's divisions fell back through our camp on their way to Alexandria. We knew this was the last. We put the thousand wounded men we then had into the train. I took one carload of them and Mrs. M. another. The men took to the horses. We steamed off, and two hours later there was no Fairfax Station. We reached Alexandria at ten o'clock at night, and, oh, the repast which met those poor men at the train. The people of the island are the most noble I ever saw or heard of. I stood in my car and fed the men till they could eat no more. Then the people would take us home and feed us, and after that we came home. I had slept one and one half hours since Saturday night and I am well and strong and wait to go again if I have need.

Immediately after the second Bull Run, or Manassas, followed the battle of Chantilly. It was a woeful battle for the Federal cause. The Confederates were completely successful. Pope's army retreated to Washington in almost as great a state of panic as had characterized the army of McDowell in the previous year. Nothing saved Washington from capture but the fact that the Confederate forces had been so reduced by continuous fighting that they were unable to take advantage of their success. But they had captured the Federal wagon trains; had inflicted far greater losses than they had themselves endured, and were in so confident a frame of mind that Lee immediately prepared to cross the Potomac, invade the North, and bring the war, as he hoped, to a speedy end. It was under these conditions that Clara Barton continued her education at the battle-front.

Among many other experiences on the field of Chantilly, Miss Barton recalled these incidents:

The slight, naked chest of a fair-haired lad caught my eye, and dropping down beside him, I bent low to draw the remnant of his torn blouse about him, when with a quick cry he threw his left arm across my neck and, burying his face in the folds of my dress, wept like a child at his mother's knee. I took his head in my hands and held it until his great burst of grief passed away. "And do you know me?" he asked at length; "I am Charley Hamilton who used to carry your satchel home from school!" My faithful pupil, poor Charley. That mangled right arm would never carry a satchel again.

About three o'clock in the morning I observed a surgeon with his little flickering candle in hand approaching me with cautious step far up in the wood. "Lady," he said as he drew near, "will you go with me? Out on the hills is a poor distressed lad, mortally wounded and dying. His piteous cries for his sister have touched all our hearts and none of us can relieve him, but rather seem to distress him by our presence."

By this time I was following him back over the bloody track, with great beseeching eyes of anguish on every side looking up into our faces saying so plainly, "Don't step on us."

"He can't last half an hour longer," said the surgeon as we toiled on. "He is already quite cold, shot through the abdomen, a terrible wound." By this time the cries became plainly audible to me.

"Mary, Mary, sister Mary, come, — oh, come, I am wounded, Mary! I am shot. I am dying — oh, come to me — I have called you so long and my strength is almost gone — Don't let me die here alone. Oh, Mary, Mary, come!"

Of all the tones of entreaty to which I have listened — and certainly I have had some experience of sorrow — I

think these, sounding through that dismal night, the most heart-rending. As we drew near, some twenty persons, attracted by his cries, had gathered around and stood with moistened eyes and helpless hands waiting the change which would relieve them all. And in the midst, stretched upon the ground, lay, scarcely full grown, a young man with a graceful head of hair, tangled and matted, thrown back from a forehead and a face of livid whiteness. His throat was bare. His hands, bloody, clasped his breast, his large, bewildered eyes turning anxiously in every direction. And ever from between his ashen lips pealed that piteous cry of "Mary! Mary! Come."

I approached him unobserved, and, motioning the lights away, I knelt by him alone in the darkness. Shall I confess that I intended if possible to cheat him out of his terrible death agony? But my lips were truer than my heart, and would not speak the word "Brother," I had willed them to do. So I placed my hands upon his neck, kissed his cold forehead, and laid my cheek against his.

The illusion was complete; the act had done the falsehood my lips refused to speak. I can never forget that cry of joy. "Oh, Mary! Mary! You have come? I knew you would come if I called you and I have called you so long. I could not die without you, Mary. Don't cry, Darling, I am not afraid to die now that you have come to me. Oh, bless you. Bless you, Mary." And he ran his cold, blood-wet hands about my neck, passed them over my face, and twined them in my hair, which by this time had freed itself from fastenings and was hanging damp and heavy upon my shoulders. He gathered the loose locks in his stiffened fingers and holding them to his lips continued to whisper through them, "Bless you, bless you, Mary!" And I felt the hot tears of joy trickling from the eyes I had thought stony in death. This encouraged me, and, wrapping his feet

closely in blankets and giving him such stimulants as he could take, I seated myself on the ground and lifted him on my lap, and drawing the shawl on my own shoulders also about his I bade him rest.

I listened till his blessings grew fainter, and in ten minutes with them on his lips he fell asleep. So the gray morning found us; my precious charge had grown warm, and was comfortable.

Of course the morning light would reveal his mistake. But he had grown calm and was refreshed and able to endure it, and when finally he woke, he seemed puzzled for a moment, but then he smiled and said: "I knew before I opened my eyes that this could n't be Mary. I know now that she could n't get here, but it is almost as good. You've made me so happy. Who is it?"

I said it was simply a lady who, hearing that he was wounded, had come to care for him. He wanted the name, and with childlike simplicity he spelled it letter by letter to know if he were right. "In my pocket," he said, "you will find mother's last letter; please get it and write your name upon it, for I want both names by me when I die."

"Will they take away the wounded?" he asked. "Yes," I replied, "the first train for Washington is nearly ready now." "I must go," he said quickly. "Are you able?" I asked. "I must go if I die on the way. I'll tell you why; I am poor mother's only son, and when she consented that I go to the war, I promised her faithfully that if I were not killed outright, but wounded, I would try every means in my power to be taken home to her dead or alive. If I die on the train, they will not throw me off, and if I were buried in Washington, she can get me. But out here in the Virginia woods in the hands of the enemy, never. I *must* go!"

I sent for the surgeon in charge of the train and requested that my boy be taken.

"Oh, impossible, madam, he is mortally wounded and



will never reach the hospital! We must take those who have a hope of life." "But you must take him." "I cannot" — "Can you, Doctor, guarantee the lives of all you have on that train?" "I wish I could," said he sadly. "They are the worst cases; nearly fifty per cent must die eventually of their wounds and hardships."

"Then give this lad a chance with them. He can only die, and he has given good and sufficient reasons why he must go — and a woman's word for it, Doctor. You take him. Send your men for him." Whether yielding to argument or entreaty, I neither knew nor cared so long as he did yield nobly and kindly. And they gathered up the fragments of the poor, torn boy and laid him carefully on a blanket on the crowded train and with stimulants and food and a kind-hearted attendant, pledged to take him alive or dead to Armory Square Hospital and tell them he was Hugh Johnson, of New York, and to mark his grave.

Although three hours of my time had been devoted to one sufferer among thousands, it must not be inferred that our general work had been suspended or that my assistants had been equally inefficient. They had seen how I was engaged and nobly redoubled their exertions to make amends for my deficiencies.

Probably not a man was laid upon those cars who did not receive some personal attention at their hands, some little kindness, if it were only to help lift him more tenderly.

This finds us shortly after daylight Monday morning. Train after train of cars was rushing on for the wounded, and hundreds of wagons were bringing them in from the field still held by the enemy, where some poor sufferers had lain three days with no visible means of sustenance. If immediately placed upon the trains and not detained, at least twenty-four hours must elapse before they could be in the hospital and properly nourished. They were already famishing, weak and sinking from loss of blood,



and they could ill afford a further fast of twenty-four hours. I felt confident that, unless nourished at once, all the weaker portion must be past recovery before reaching the hospitals of Washington. If once taken from the wagons and laid with those already cared for, they would be overlooked and perish on the way. Something must be done to meet this fearful emergency. I sought the various officers on the grounds, explained the case to them, and asked permission to feed all the men as they arrived before they should be taken from the wagons. It was well for the poor sufferers of that field that it was controlled by noble-hearted, generous officers, quick to feel and prompt to act.

They at once saw the propriety of my request and gave orders that all wagons should be stayed at a certain point and only moved when every one had been seen and fed. This point secured, I commenced my day's work of climbing from the wheel to the brake of every wagon and speaking to and feeding with my own hands each soldier until he expressed himself satisfied.

Still there were bright spots along the darkened lines. Early in the morning the Provost Marshal came to ask me if I could use fifty men. He had that number, who for some slight breach of military discipline were under guard and useless, unless I could use them. I only regretted there were not five hundred. They came, — strong, willing men, — and these, added to our original force and what we had gained incidentally, made our number something over eighty, and, believe me, eighty men and three women, acting with well-directed purpose, will accomplish a good deal in a day. Our fifty prisoners dug graves and gathered and buried the dead, bore mangled men over the rough ground in their arms, loaded cars, built fires, made soup, and administered it. And I failed to discern that their services were less valuable than those of the other men. I had long suspected, and have been since convinced, that a private soldier may be

placed under guard, court-martialed, and even be imprisoned without forfeiting his honor or manliness; that the real dishonor is often upon the gold lace rather than the army blue.

At three o'clock the last train of wounded left. All day we had known that the enemy hung upon the hills and were waiting to break in upon us. . . .

At four o'clock the clouds gathered black and murky, and the low growl of distant thunders was heard while lightning continually illuminated the horizon. The still air grew thick and stifled, and the very branches appeared to droop and bow as if in grief at the memory of the terrible scenes so lately enacted and the gallant lives so nobly yielded up beneath their shelter.

This was the afternoon of Monday. Since Saturday noon I had not thought of tasting food, and we had just drawn around a box for that purpose, when, of a sudden, air and earth and all about us shook with one mingled crash of God's and man's artillery. The lightning played and the thunder rolled incessantly and the cannon roared louder and nearer each minute. Chantilly with all its darkness and horrors had opened in the rear.

The description of this battle I leave to those who saw and moved in it, as it is my purpose to speak only of events in which I was a witness or actor. Although two miles distant, we knew the battle was intended for us, and watched the firing as it neared and receded and waited minute by minute for the rest.

With what desperation our men fought hour after hour in the rain and darkness! How they were overborne and rallied, how they suffered from mistaken orders, and blundered, and lost themselves in the strange mysterious wood. And how, after all, with giant strength and veteran bravery, they checked the foe and held him at bay, is an all-proud record of history.

And the courage of the soldier who braved death in the darkness of Chantilly let no man question.

The rain continued to pour in torrents, and the darkness became impenetrable save from the lightning leaping above our heads and the fitful flash of the guns, as volley after volley rang through the stifled air and lighted up the gnarled trunks and dripping branches among which we ever waited and listened.

In the midst of this, and how guided no man knows, came still another train of wounded men, and a waiting train of cars upon the track received them. This time nearly alone, for my worn-out assistants could work no longer, I continued to administer such food as I had left.

Do you begin to wonder what it could be? Army crackers put into knapsacks and haversacks and beaten to crumbs between stones, and stirred into a mixture of wine, whiskey, and water, and sweetened with coarse brown sugar.

Not very inviting you will think, but I assure you it was always acceptable. But whether it should have been classed as food, or, like the Widow Bedott's cabbage, as a delightful beverage, it would puzzle an epicure to determine. No matter, so it imparted strength and comfort.

The departure of this train cleared the grounds of wounded for the night, and as the line of fire from its plunging engines died out in the darkness, a strange sensation of weakness and weariness fell upon me, almost defying my utmost exertion to move one foot before the other.

A little Sibley tent had been hastily pitched for me in a slight hollow upon the hillside. Your imaginations will not fail to picture its condition. Rivulets of water had rushed through it during the last three hours. Still I attempted to reach it, as its white surface, in the darkness, was a protection from the wheels of wagons and trampling of beasts.

Perhaps I shall never forget the painful effort which the making of those few rods and the gaining of the tent

cost me. How many times I fell, from sheer exhaustion, in the darkness and mud of that slippery hillside, I have no knowledge, but at last I grasped the welcome canvas, and a well-established brook, which washed in on the upper side at the opening that served as door, met me on my entrance. My entire floor was covered with water, not an inch of dry, solid ground.

One of my lady assistants had previously taken train for Washington and the other, worn out by faithful labors, was crouched upon the top of some boxes in one corner fast asleep. No such convenience remained for me, and I had no strength to arrange one. I sought the highest side of my tent which I remembered was grass-grown, and, ascertaining that the water was not very deep, I sank down. It was no laughing matter then. But the recollection of my position has since afforded me amusement.

I remember myself sitting on the ground, upheld by my left arm, my head resting on my hand, impelled by an almost uncontrollable desire to lie completely down, and prevented by the certain conviction that if I did, water would flow into my ears.

How long I balanced between my desires and cautions, I have no positive knowledge, but it is very certain that the former carried the point by the position from which I was aroused at twelve o'clock by the rumbling of more wagons of wounded men. I slept two hours, and oh, what strength I had gained! I may never know two other hours of equal worth. I sprang to my feet dripping wet, covered with ridges of dead grass and leaves, wrung the water from my hair and skirts, and went forth again to my work.

When I stood again under the sky, the rain had ceased, the clouds were sullenly retiring, and the lightning, as if deserted by its boisterous companions, had withdrawn to a distant corner and was playing quietly by itself. For the great volleying thunders of heaven and earth



had settled down on the fields. Silent? I said so. And it was, save the ceaseless rumbling of the never-ending train of army wagons which brought alike the wounded, the dying, and the dead.

And thus the morning of the third day broke upon us, drenched, weary, hungry, sore-footed, sad-hearted, discouraged, and under orders to retreat.

A little later, the plaintive wail of a single fife, the slow beat of a muffled drum, the steady tramp, tramp, tramp of heavy feet, the gleam of ten thousand bayonets on the hills, and with bowed heads and speechless lips, poor Kearny's leaderless men came marching through

This was the signal for retreat. All day they came, tired, hungry, ragged, defeated, retreating, they knew not whither — they cared not whither.

The enemy's cavalry, skirting the hills, admonished us each moment that we must soon decide to go from them or with them. But our work must be accomplished, and no wounded men once given into our hands must be left. And with the spirit of desperation, we struggled on.

At three o'clock an officer galloped up to me, with "Miss Barton, can you ride?" "Yes, sir," I replied.

"But you have no lady's saddle — could you ride mine?"

"Yes, sir, or without it, if you have blanket and surcingle."

"Then you can risk another hour," he exclaimed, and galloped off.

At four he returned at a break-neck speed, and, leaping from his horse, said, "Now is your time. The enemy is already breaking over the hills; try the train. It will go through, unless they have flanked, and cut the bridge a mile above us. In that case I've a reserve horse for you, and you must take your chances to escape across the country."

In two minutes I was on the train. The last wounded man at the station was also on. The conductor stood



with a torch which he applied to a pile of combustible material beside the track. And we rounded the curve which took us from view and we saw the station ablaze, and a troop of cavalry dashing down the hill. The bridge was uncut and midnight found us at Washington.

You have the full record of my sleep — from Friday night till Wednesday morning — two hours. You will not wonder that I slept during the next twenty-four.

On Friday (the following), I repaired to Armory Square Hospital to learn who, of all the hundreds sent, had reached that point.

I traced the chaplain's record, and there upon the last page freshly written stood the name of Hugh Johnson

Turning to Chaplain Jackson, I asked — "Did that man live until to-day?"

"He died during the latter part of last night," he replied. "His friends reached him some two days ago, and they are now taking his body from the ward to be conveyed to the depot."

I looked in the direction his hand indicated, and there, beside a coffin, about to be lifted into a wagon, stood a gentleman, the mother, and Sister Mary!

"Had he his reason?" I asked.

"Oh, perfectly."

"And his mother and sister were with him two days."

"Yes."

There was no need of me. He had given his own messages; I could add nothing to their knowledge of him, and would fain be spared the scene of thanks. Poor Hugh, thy piteous prayers reached and were answered, and with eyes and heart full, I turned away, and never saw Sister Mary.

These were days of darkness — a darkness that might be felt.

The shattered bands of Pope and Banks! Burnside's weary legions! Reënforcements from West Virginia — and all that now remained of the once glorious Army of

the Peninsula had gathered for shelter beneath the redoubts and guns that girdled Washington.

How the soldiers remembered these ministrations is shown in letters such as this:

CHARLES E. SIMMONS, Secretary, 21st Regt. Mass. Vol.

CHARLES E. FRYE, President

7 JACQUES AVENUE,

WORCESTER, MASS.

September 13th, 1911

TO CLARA BARTON.

The survivors of the Veteran 21st Massachusetts Regiment, assembled in "Odd Fellows Temple in the City of Worcester," wish to put on record the day of your coming to us at Bull Run and Chantilly, when we were in our deepest bereavement and loss; how your presence and deeds brought assurance and comfort; and how you assisted us up the hot and rugged sides of South Mountain by your ministry forty-nine years ago to-day, at and over the "Burnside Bridge" at Antietam, then through Pleasant Valley, to Falmouth, and in course of time were across the Rappahannock and storming the heights of Fredericksburg; were with us, indeed, when we recrossed the river and found shelter in our tents — broken, bruised, and sheared. With us evermore in body and spirit, lo, these fifty years. The prayer of the 21st Regiment is, God bless our old and tried friend. It was also voted that we present to Clara Barton a bouquet of flowers.

CHARLES E. SIMMONS, Secretary

## CHAPTER XIV

### HARPER'S FERRY TO ANTIETAM

CLARA BARTON had now definitely settled the method of her operations. She had demonstrated the practicability of getting to the front early, and had begun to learn what equipment was necessary if she were to perform her work successfully. Washington was still to be her headquarters, her base of supplies, but from Washington as a center she would radiate in any direction where the need was, going by the most direct route and arriving on the scene of conflict as soon as possible after authentic news of the battle. This was in contravention of all established custom, which was for women, if they assisted at all, to remain far in the rear until wounded soldiers were conveyed to them, or until the retreat of the opposing army made it safe for them to come upon the field where the conflict had been. It disheartened her to have to remain in Washington where there was no lack of willing assistance, and wait till it was safe to stir.

Moreover, she did not find her service in the Washington hospitals wholly cheerful. It depressed her to move among the wounded and witness the after effects of the battle, the gangrene, the infection of wounds, and the slow fevers, and to think how much of this might have been avoided if the men could have had relief earlier. An extract from a letter to her sister-in-law, written in the summer of 1862, indicates something of her feeling at this time:

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 26th, 1862

MY DEAR SISTER JULIA:

I cannot make a pleasant letter of this; everything is sad; the very pain which is breathed out in the atmosphere of this city is enough to sadden any human heart. Five thousand suffering men, and room preparing for eight thousand more, — poor, fevered, cut-up wretches, it agonizes me to think of it. I go when I can; to-day am having a visit from a little Massachusetts (Lowell) boy, seventeen, his widowed mother's only child, whom I found recovering from fever in Mount Pleasant Hospital. It had left him with rheumatism. He was tender, and, when I asked him "what he wanted," burst in tears and said, "I want to *see my mother*. She did n't know when I left." I appealed to the chief surgeon and applied for his discharge as a native of Massachusetts. It was promised me, and, when the astonished little fellow heard it, he threw himself across the back of his chair and sobbed so he could scarcely get his breath. He had been ordered to another hospital next day; the order was checked; this was a week ago, and *yesterday he came to me discharged*, and with forty-three dollars and some new clothes. I send him on *to-night* to his mother as a Sunday present. She knows nothing of it, only that he is suffering in hospital. I am ungrateful to be heavy-hearted when I have been able to do *only that little*. His name is William Diggles, nephew of Jonas Diggles, tailor of New Sharon, Maine.

Authentic news of battles reached Washington slowly. At first there was no certainty whether a battle was a battle or only a skirmish. Then, when it became certain that a battle had been fought, the first news was almost always unreliable. It would have been a great advantage if Clara Barton could have known where a battle was to be fought. Manifestly, she could not always know.



The generals in command did not always know. But there were times when official Washington had premonitory information. She sought to establish relationship with sufficiently high authority to enable her to know in advance where such battles were to be fought as were brought on by a Union offensive. On Saturday night, September 13, 1862, she had secret information that a great battle was about to be fought. A small battle had been fought the day before and it had been disastrous. There had been an engagement at Harper's Ferry in which the Union army had 44 killed, 173 wounded, and the amazing number of 12,520 missing or captured. She already suspected, and a little later she knew, that that long list of men missing and captured, was more ominous than an added number killed or wounded:

"Our army was weary," she said, "and lacked not only physical strength, but confidence and spirit. And why should they not? Always defeated! Always on the retreat! I was almost demoralized myself! And I had just commenced."

She "had just commenced"; that was characteristic of her. She had been ministering to the soldiers ever since the day when the first blood was shed on the 19th of April, 1861, and had been at it without rest or stint ever since. But she had just commenced; she had just learned how to do it in the way that was hereafter to characterize her methods.

The defeat at Harper's Ferry threw Washington into a panic. But it moved McClellan to a long-deferred engagement with the Union forces in the offensive.

The long maneuvering and skirmishing [she wrote], had yielded no fruit. Pope had been sacrificed and all the

blood shed from Yorktown to Malvern Hill seemed to have been utterly in vain. But the minor keys, upon which I played my infinitesimal note in the great anthem of war and victory which rang through the land when these two fearful forces met and closed, with gun-lock kissing gun-lock across the rocky bed of Antietam, are yet known only to a few. Washington was filled with dismay, and all the North was moved as a tempest stirs a forest.

Maryland lay temptingly in view, and Lee and Jackson with the flower of the rebel army marched for its ripening fields. Who it was that whispered hastily on Saturday night, September 13, — "*Harper's Ferry, not a moment to be lost*" — I have never dared to name.

In thirty minutes I was waiting the always kindly spoken "*Come in,*" of my patron saint, Major, now Quartermaster-General, Rucker.

"Major," I said — "I want to go to Harper's Ferry; can I go?"

"Perhaps so," he replied, with genial but doubtful expression. "Perhaps so; do you want a conveyance?"

"Yes," I said.

"But an army wagon is the only vehicle that will reach there with any burden in safety. I can send you one of these to-morrow morning."

I said, "I will be ready."

But here was to begin a new experience for me. I was to ride eighty miles in an army wagon, and straight into battle and danger at that.

I could take no female companion, no friend, but the stout working-men I had use for.

You, who are accustomed to see a coach and a pair of fine horses with a well-dressed, gentlemanly driver draw up to your door, will scarcely appreciate the sensation with which I watched the approach of the long and high, white-covered, tortoise-motined vehicle, with its string of little, frisky, long-eared animals, with the broad-

shouldered driver astride, and the eternal jerk of the single rein by which he navigated his craft up to my door.

The time, you will remember, was Sunday; the place, 7th Street, just off Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington City.

Then and there, my vehicle was loaded, with boxes, bags, and parcels, and, last of all, I found a place for myself and the four men who were to go with me.

I took no Saratoga trunk, but remembered, at the last moment, to tie up a few articles in my handkerchief.

Thus equipped, and seated, my chain of little uneasy animals commenced to straighten itself, and soon brought us into the center of Pennsylvania Avenue, in full gaze of the whole city in its best attire, and on its way to church.

Thus all day we rattled on over the stones and dikes, and up and down the hills of Maryland.

At nightfall we turned into an open field, and, dismounting, built a camp-fire, prepared supper, and retired, I to my work in my wagon, the men wrapped in their blankets, camping about me.

All night an indistinct roar of artillery sounded upon our ears, and waking or sleeping, we were conscious of trouble ahead; but it was well for our rest that no messenger came to tell us how death reveled among our brave troops that night.

Before daybreak, we had breakfasted, and were on our way. You will not infer that, because by ourselves, we were alone upon the road. We were directly in the midst of a train of army wagons, at least ten miles in length, moving in solid column — the Government supplies and ammunition, food, and medicine for an army in battle.

Wearied and sick from their late exposures and hardships, the men were falling by the wayside, faint, pale, and often dying.

I busied myself as I rode on hour by hour in cutting loaves of bread in slices and passing them to the pale,

haggard wrecks as they sat by the roadside, or staggered on to avoid capture, and at each little village we entered, I purchased all the bread its inhabitants would sell.

Horses as well as men had suffered and their dead bodies strewed the wayside.

My poor words can never describe to you the consternation and horror with which we descended from our wagon, and trod, there in the mountain pass, that field of death.

There, where we now walked with peaceful feet, twelve hours before the ground had rocked with carnage. There in the darkness God's angels of wrath and death had swept and, foe facing foe, the souls of men went out. And there, side by side, stark and cold in death mingled the Northern Blue and the Southern Gray.

To such of you as have stood in the midst or followed in the track of armies and witnessed the strange and dreadful confusion of recent battle-grounds, I need not describe this field. And to you who have not, no description would ever avail.

The giant rocks, hanging above our heads, seemed to frown upon the scene, and the sighing trees which hung lovingly upon their rugged edge drooped low and wept their pitying dews upon the livid brows and ghastly wounds beneath.

Climbing hills and clambering over ledges we sought in vain for some poor wretch in whom life had still left the power to suffer. Not one remained, and, grateful for this, but shocked and sick of heart, we returned to our waiting conveyance.

So far as Harper's Ferry was concerned, her advance information appeared to have come too late to be of any value. The number of wounded was not large, and these had all been taken to Frederick, Maryland. Only the day before, Stonewall Jackson and his men had passed through, and Barbara Frietchie had refused to haul



down her flag. There had not been many wounded, anyway; the Federal army simply had failed to fight at Harper's Ferry. The word "morale" was not then in common use, but that was what the Union army had lost. On Monday, September 15, 1862, was fought the battle of South Mountain, Maryland. There Hooker and Franklin and Reno were defeated with a loss of 325 men killed, 1403 wounded, and 85 prisoners. There were few prisoners as compared with Harper's Ferry, but that was partly because the mountainous country gave the defeated Union soldiers a better chance to escape. The defeat was beyond question, and General Reno was killed. While Clara Barton was driving from Harper's Ferry where she had expected to find a battle, she came suddenly upon a battle-field, that of South Mountain. There she did her ministering work. But Harper's Ferry and South Mountain were both preliminary to the real battle of which she had had her Washington warning. And now she made a discovery. If she was ever to get to the front in time to be of the greatest possible service, she must short-circuit the ordinary military method which would have put her and her equipment among the baggage-wagons. For her the motto from this time on was, "Follow the cannon." This gave her something approaching an open road, and afforded her the opportunity which she was just learning how to utilize with greatest efficiency.

The increase of stragglers along the road [Miss Barton recalled] was alarming, showing that our army was weary, and lacked not only physical strength, but confidence and spirit.

And why should they not? Always defeated! Always



on the retreat! I was almost demoralized myself! And I had just commenced.

I have already spoken of the great length of the army train, and that we could no more change our position than one of the planets. Unless we should wait and fall in the rear, we could not advance a single wagon.

And for the benefit of those who may not understand, I may say that the order of the train was, first, ammunition; next, food and clothing for well troops; and finally, the hospital supplies. Thus, in case of the battle the needed stores for the army, according to the slow, cautious movement of such bodies, must be from two to three days in coming up.

Meanwhile, as usual, our men must languish and die. Something must be done to gain time. And I resorted to strategy. We found an early resting-place, supped by our camp-fire, and slept again among the dews and damps.

At one o'clock, when everything was still, we arose, breakfasted, harnessed, and moved on past the whole train, which like ourselves had camped for the night. At daylight we had gained ten miles and were up with the artillery and in advance even of the ammunition.

All that weary, dusty day I followed the cannon, and nightfall brought us up with the great Army of the Potomac, 80,000 men resting upon their arms in the face of a foe equal in number, sullen, straitened, and desperate.

Closely following the guns we drew up where they did, among the smoke of the thousand camp-fires, men hastening to and fro, and the atmosphere loaded with noxious vapors, till it seemed the very breath of pestilence. We were upon the left wing of the army, and this was the last evening's rest of Burnside's men. To how many hundred it proved the last rest upon the earth, the next day's record shows.

In all this vast assemblage I saw no other trace of womankind. I was faint, but could not eat; weary, but could not sleep; depressed, but could not weep.

So I climbed into my wagon, tied down the cover, dropped down in the little nook I had occupied so long, and prayed God with all the earnestness of my soul to stay the morrow's strife or send us victory. And for my poor self, that He impart somewhat of wisdom and strength to my heart, nerve to my arm, speed to my feet, and fill my hands for the terrible duties of the coming day. Heavy and sad I awaited its approach.

The battle of Antietam occurred on September 16 and 17, 1862. It was the first battle in the East that roused to any considerable degree the forlorn hope of the friends of the Union. It was the first real Eastern victory for the Union army. It was not as decided a victory as it ought to have been, but it was a victory. It put heart into Abraham Lincoln and certified to his conscience that the time had come to redeem the promise he had made to God — that if He would give victory to the Union arms Lincoln would free the slaves. McClellan did not follow up his advantage as he should have done and make that victory triumphant. But he did something other than delay and retreat, and he put some heart into the Union army when it discovered that it need not forever be on the defensive, nor always suffer defeat. In this great, and, in spite of its limitations, victorious, battle, Clara Barton was on the ground before the first gun was fired, and she did not leave the field until the last wounded man had been cared for. At the outset she watched the battle, but almost immediately she laid down her field-glasses, went to the place where the wounded were being brought in, and was able to perform her work of ministration without a single hour's delay.

She told her story of the conflict as she saw it:

The battle commenced on the right and already with the aid of field-glasses we saw our own forces, led by "Fighting Joe" [Hooker], overborne and falling back.

Burnside commenced to send cavalry and artillery to his aid, and, thinking our place might be there, we followed them around eight miles, turning into a cornfield near a house and barn, and stopping in the rear of the last gun, which completed the terrible line of artillery which ranged diagonally in the rear of Hooker's army. That day a garden wall only separated us. The infantry were already driven back two miles, and stood under cover of the guns. The fighting had been fearful. We had met wounded men, walking or borne to the rear for the last two miles. But around the old barn there lay, too badly wounded to admit of removal, some three hundred thus early in the day, for it was scarce ten o'clock.

We loosened our mules and commenced our work. The corn was so high as to conceal the house, which stood some distance to the right, but, judging that a path which I observed must lead to it, and also that surgeons must be operating there, I took my arms full of stimulants and bandages and followed the opening.

Arriving at a little wicker gate, I found the dooryard of a small house, and myself face to face with one of the kindest and noblest surgeons I have ever met, Dr. Dunn, of Conneautville, Pennsylvania.

Speechless both, for an instant, he at length threw up his hands with "God has indeed remembered us! How did you get from Virginia here so soon? And again to supply our necessities! And they are terrible. We have nothing but our instruments and the little chloroform we brought in our pockets. We have torn up the last sheets we could find in this house. We have not a bandage, rag, lint, or string, and all these shell-wounded men bleeding to death."

Upon the porch stood four tables, with an etherized patient upon each, a surgeon standing over him with his

box of instruments, and a bunch of green corn leaves beside him.

With what joy I laid my precious burden down among them, and thought that never before had linen looked so white, or wine so red. Oh! be grateful, ladies, that God put it in your hearts to perform the work you did in those days. How doubly sanctified was the sacred old household linen woven by the hands of the sainted mother long gone to her reward. For you arose the tender blessings of those grateful men, which linger in my memory as faithfully to-night as do the bugle notes which called them to their doom.

Thrice that day was the ground in front of us contested, lost, and won, and twice our men were driven back under cover of that fearful range of guns, and each time brought its hundreds of wounded to our crowded ground.

A little after noon, the enemy made a desperate attempt to regain what had been lost; Hooker, Sedgwick, Dana, Richardson, Hartsuff, and Mansfield had been borne wounded from the field and the command of the right wing devolved upon General Howard.

The smoke became so dense as to obscure our sight, and the hot, sulphurous breath of battle dried our tongues and parched our lips to bleeding.

We were in a slight hollow, and all shell which did not break over our guns in front came directly among or over us, bursting above our heads or burying themselves in the hills beyond.

A man lying upon the ground asked for a drink; I stopped to give it, and, having raised him with my right hand, was holding him.

Just at this moment a bullet sped its free and easy way between us, tearing a hole in my sleeve and found its way into his body. He fell back dead. There was no more to be done for him and I left him to his rest. I have never mended that hole in my sleeve. I wonder if a soldier ever does mend a bullet hole in his coat?



The patient endurance of these men was most astonishing. As many as could be were carried into the barn, as a slight protection against random shot. Just outside the door lay a man wounded in the face, the ball having entered the lower maxillary on the left side and lodged among the bones of the right cheek. His imploring look drew me to him, when, placing his finger upon the sharp protuberance, he said, "Lady, will you tell me what this is that burns so?" I replied that it must be the ball which had been too far spent to cut its way entirely through.

"It is terribly painful," he said. "Won't you take it out?"

I said I would go to the tables for a surgeon. "No! No!" he said, catching my dress. "They cannot come to me. I must wait my turn, for this is a little wound. You can get the ball. There is a knife in your pocket. Please take the ball out for me."

This was a new call. I had never severed the nerves and fibers of human flesh, and I said I could not hurt him so much. He looked up, with as nearly a smile as such a mangled face could assume, saying, "You cannot hurt me, dear lady, I can endure any pain that your hands can create. Please do it. It will relieve me so much."

I could not withstand his entreaty and, opening the best blade of my pocket-knife, prepared for the operation. Just at his head lay a stalwart orderly sergeant from Illinois, with a face beaming with intelligence and kindness, and who had a bullet directly through the fleshy part of both thighs. He had been watching the scene with great interest and, when he saw me commence to raise the poor fellow's head, and no one to support it, with a desperate effort he succeeded in raising himself to a sitting posture, exclaiming as he did so, "I will help do that." Shoving himself along the ground he took the wounded head in his hands and held it while I extracted the ball and washed and bandaged the face.

I do not think a surgeon would have pronounced it a scientific operation, but that it was successful I dared to hope from the gratitude of the patient.

I assisted the sergeant to lie down again, brave and cheerful as he had risen, and passed on to others.

Returning in half an hour, I found him weeping, the great tears rolling diligently down his manly cheeks. I thought his effort had been too great for his strength and expressed my fears. "Oh! No! No! Madam," he replied. "It is not for myself. I am very well, but," pointing to another just brought in, he said, "this is my comrade, and he tells me that our regiment is all cut to pieces, that my captain was the last officer left, and he is dead."

Oh, God! what a costly war! This man could laugh at pain, face death without a tremor, and yet weep like a child over the loss of his comrades and his captain.

At two o'clock my men came to tell me that the last loaf of bread had been cut and the last cracker pounded. We had three boxes of wine still unopened. What should they do?

"Open the wine and give that," I said, "and God help us."

The next instant an ejaculation from Sergeant Field, who had opened the first box, drew my attention, and, to my astonished gaze, the wine had been packed in nicely sifted Indian meal.

If it had been gold dust it would have seemed poor in comparison. I had no words. No one spoke. In silence the men wiped their eyes and resumed their work.

Of twelve boxes of wine which we carried, the first nine, when opened, were found packed in sawdust, the last three, when all else was gone, in Indian meal.

A woman would not hesitate long under circumstances like these.

This was an old farmhouse. Six large kettles were picked up and set over fires, almost as quickly as I can tell it, and I was mixing water and meal for gruel.

It occurred to us to explore the cellar. The chimney rested on an arch, and, forcing the door, we discovered three barrels and a bag. "They are full," said the sergeant, and, rolling one into the light, found that it bore the mark of Jackson's army. These three barrels of flour and a bag of salt had been stored there by the rebel army during its upward march.

I shall never experience such a sensation of wealth and competency again, from utter poverty to such riches.

All that night my thirty men (for my corps of workers had increased to that number during the day) carried buckets of hot gruel for miles down the line to the wounded and dying where they fell.

This time, profiting by experience, we had lanterns to hang in and around the barn, and, having directed it to be done, I went to the house and found the surgeon in charge, sitting alone, beside a table, upon which he rested his elbow, apparently meditating upon a bit of tallow candle which flickered in the center.

Approaching carefully, I said, "You are tired, Doctor." He started up with a look almost savage, "Tired! Yes, I am tired, tired of such heartlessness, such carelessness!" Turning full upon me, he continued: "Think of the condition of things. Here are at least one thousand wounded men, terribly wounded, five hundred of whom cannot live till daylight, without attention. That two inches of candle is all I have or can get. What can I do? How can I endure it?"

I took him by the arm, and, leading him to the door, pointed in the direction of the barn where the lanterns glistened like stars among the waving corn.

"What is that?" he exclaimed.

"The barn is lighted," I said, "and the house will be directly."

"Who did it?"

"I, Doctor."

"Where did you get them?"

"Brought them with me."

"How many have you?"

"All you want — four boxes."

He looked at me a moment, as if waking from a dream, turned away without a word, and never alluded to the circumstances, but the deference which he paid me was almost painful.

During a lecture in the West, Miss Barton related this incident, and as she closed a gentleman sprang upon the stage, and, addressing the audience, exclaimed: "Ladies and gentlemen, if I never have acknowledged that favor, I will do it now. I am that surgeon."

Darkness [Miss Barton continues] brought silence and peace, and respite and rest to our gallant men. As they had risen, regiment by regiment, from their grassy beds in the morning, so at night the fainting remnant again sank down on the trampled blood-stained earth, the weary to sleep, and the wounded to die.

Through the long starlit night we wrought and hoped and prayed. But it was only when in the hush of the following day, as we glanced over that vast Aceldama, that we learned at what a fearful cost the gallant Union army had won the battle of Antietam.

Antietam! With its eight miles of camping armies, face to face; 160,000 men to spring up at dawn like the old Scot from the heather! Its miles of artillery shaking the earth like a chain of Ætnas! Its ten hours of uninterrupted battle! Its thunder and its fire! The sharp, unflinching order, — "Hold the Bridge, boys, — always the Bridge." At length, the quiet! The pale moonlight on its cooling guns! The weary men, the dying and the dead! The flag of truce that buried our enemies slain, and Antietam was fought, and won, and the foe turned back!

Clara Barton remained on the battle-field of Antietam



until her supplies were exhausted and she was completely worn out. Not only fatigue but fever came upon her, and she was carried back to Washington apparently sick. But the call of duty gave her fresh strength, and she was soon wondering where the next battle was to be and planning to be on the field. Almost the only entry in her diary in the autumn of 1862, aside from memoranda of wounded men and similar entries relating to people other than herself, is one of October 23, which she began in some detail, but broke off abruptly. She records that she "left Washington for Harper's Ferry expecting to meet a battle there. Have taken four teams of Colonel Rucker loaded at his office, traveled and camped as usual, reaching Harper's Ferry the third day. At the first end of the pontoon bridge one of Peter's mules ran off and we delayed the progress of the army for twenty minutes to be extricated."

The rest of the entry contains the names of her drivers, details of the overturned wagon, and other memoranda. Two things are of interest in this fragmentary record. One is the definiteness of the method which she now had adopted of going where she "expected to meet a battle." The other is the fact that a delay of twenty minutes, caused by an accident to one of her wagons on the pontoon bridge, illustrates a reason why, in general, armies cannot permit even so necessary things as supplies for the wounded to get in the way of the free movement of troops. However, this delay was quite exceptional. She did not usually cause any inconvenience of this sort, nor did it in this instance result in any serious harm. On this occasion she was provided with an ambulance for her own use. That thoughtful provision for her con-

venience and means of conserving her energy, was provided for her by Quartermaster-General Rucker.

On this journey the question was decided who was really in command of her part of the expedition. In one of her lectures she described her associates on this and subsequent expeditions:

There may be those present who are curious to know how eight or ten rough, stout men, who knew nothing of me, received the fact that they were to drive their teams under the charge of a lady.

This question has been so often asked in private that I deem it proper to answer it publicly.

Well, the various expressions of their faces afforded a study. They were not soldiers, but civilians in Government employ. Drovers, butchers, hucksters, mule-breakers, probably not one of them had ever passed an hour in what could be termed "ladies' society," in his life. But every man had driven through the whole peninsular campaign. Every one of them had taken his team unharmed out of that retreat, and had sworn an oath never to drive another step in Virginia.

They were brave and skillful, understood their business to perfection, but had no art. They said and looked what they thought; and I understood them at a glance.

These teamsters proposed to go into camp at four o'clock in the afternoon, and start when they got ready in the morning, but she first established her authority over them, and then cooked them a hot supper, the first and last she ever cooked for army teamsters, and they came to her later in the evening, apologized for their obstinacy, and were ready to drive her anywhere.

"We come to tell you we are ashamed of ourselves" [their leader said].

I thought honest confession good for the soul, and did not interrupt him.

"The truth is," he continued, "in the first place we did n't want to come. There's fighting ahead and we've seen enough of that for men who don't carry muskets, only whips; and then we never seen a train under charge of a woman before and we could n't understand it, and we did n't like it, and we thought we 'd break it up, and we've been mean and contrary all day, and said a good many hard things and you've treated us like gentlemen. We had n't no right to expect that supper from you, a better meal than we've had in two years. And you've been as polite to us as if we'd been the General and his staff, and it makes us ashamed. And we've come to ask your forgiveness. We shan't trouble you no more."

My forgiveness was easily obtained. I reminded them that as men it was their duty to go where the country had need of them. As for my being a woman, they would get accustomed to that. And I assured them that, as long as I had any food, I would share it with them. That, when they were hungry and supperless, I should be; that if harm befell them, I should care for them; if sick, I should nurse them; and that, under all circumstances, I should treat them like gentlemen.

They listened silently, and, when I saw the rough, woolen coat-sleeves drawing across their faces, it was one of the best moments of my life.

Bidding me "good-night" they withdrew, excepting the leader, who went to my ambulance, hung a lighted lantern in the top, arranged the few quilts inside for my bed, assisted me up the steps, buckled the canvas down snugly outside, covered the fire safely for morning, wrapped his blanket around him, and lay down a few feet from me on the ground.

At daylight I became conscious of low voices and stifled sounds, and soon discovered that these men were

endeavoring to speak low and feed and harness their teams quietly, not to disturb me.

On the other side I heard the crackling of blazing chestnut rails and the rattling of dishes, and George came with a bucket of fresh water, to undo my buckle door latches, and announce that breakfast was nearly ready.

I had cooked my last meal for my drivers. These men remained with me six months through frost and snow and march and camp and battle; and nursed the sick, dressed the wounded, soothed the dying, and buried the dead; and if possible grew kinder and gentler every day.

There was one serious difficulty about following advance information and attempting to be on the battlefield when the battle occurred. The battle does not always occur at the time and place expected. The battle at Harper's Ferry in October, 1862, did not take place as planned. General Lee may have received the same advance information which was conveyed to Clara Barton. At all events, he was not among those present when the battle was scheduled to take place. He withdrew his army and waited until he was ready to fight. McClellan decided to follow Lee, and Clara Barton moved with the army. As she moved, she cared for the sick, supplying them from her own stores, returning to Washington with a body of sick men about the first of December. She was suffering from a felon on her hand from the first of November until near the end of that month. Her hand was lanced in the open field, and she suffered from the cold, but did not complain.

She did not remain long in Washington, but returned by way of Acquia Creek and met the army at Falmouth. From Falmouth she wrote a letter to some of the women who had been assisting her, and sent it by the hand of



the Reverend C. M. Wells, one of her reliable associates. It contains references to her sore finger and to the nature of accommodations:

CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA.  
HEADQUARTERS GENERAL STURGIS, 2ND DIVISION  
December 8th, 1862

MESSRS. BROWN & Co.

DEAR FRIENDS:

Mr. Wells returns to-morrow and I improve the opportunity to send a line by him to you, not feeling quite certain if posted matter reaches directly when sent from the army.

We reached Acquia Creek safely in the time anticipated, and to my great joy learned immediately that our old friend Captain (Major) Hall (of the 21st) was Quartermaster. As soon as the boat was unloaded, he came on board and spent the remainder of the evening with me. — We had a *home* chat, I assure you. Remained till the next day, sent a barrel of apples, etc., up to the Captain's quarters, and proceeded with the remainder of our luggage, for which it is needless to say *ready transportation* was found, and the Captain chided me for having left anything behind at the depot, as I told him I had done. On reaching Falmouth Station we found another old friend, Captain Bailey, in charge, who instituted *himself* as watch over the goods until he sent them all up to Headquarters. My ambulance came through that P.M., but for fear it might not, General Sturgis had his taken down for me, and had supper arranged and a splendid serenade. I don't know how we could have had a warmer "welcome home," as the officers termed it.

Headquarters are in the dooryard of a farmhouse, one room of which is occupied by Miss G. and myself. My wagons are a little way from me, out of sight, and I am wishing for a tent and stove to pitch and live near them. The weather is cold, and the ground covered with snow, but I could make me comfortable with a good tent, floor,

and stove, and should prefer it to a room in a rebel house and one so generally occupied.

The 21st are a few rods from me; many of the officers call to see me every day. Colonel Clark is very neighborly; he is looking finely now; he was in this P.M., and was going in search of Colonel Morse whom he thought to be a mile or two distant. I learned to-night that the 15th are only some three miles away; the 36th I cannot find yet. I have searched hard for them and shall get on their track soon, I trust.

Of army movements nothing can be said with certainty; no two persons, not even the generals, agree in reference to the future programme. The snow appears to have deranged the plans very seriously. I have received calls from two generals to-day, and in the course of conversation I discovered that their views were entirely different. General Burnside stood a long time in front of my door to-day, but to my astonishment *he did not express his opinion* — STRANGE!

I have not suffered for want of the boots yet, but should find them convenient, I presume, and shall be glad to see them. The sore finger is much the same; not *very* troublesome, although somewhat so. If you desire to reach this point, I think you would find no difficulty after getting past the guard at Washington — at Acquia you would find all right I am sure.

I can think of a host of things I wish you could take out to me.

In spite of her wish that she might have had a tent, and so have avoided living in a captured house, her residence was the Lacy house on the shore of the Rappahannock and close to Fredericksburg. There was nothing uncertain about her information this time. She knew when the battle was to occur, and at two o'clock in the morning she wrote a letter to her cousin, Vira Stone, just before the storm of battle broke:

HEADQUARTERS 2ND DIVISION  
ARMY OF THE POTOMAC  
CAMP NEAR FALMOUTH, VA.

December 12, 1862, 2 o'clock A.M.

DEAR COUSIN VIRA:

Five minutes' time with you, and God only knows what that five minutes might be worth to the — may be — doomed thousands sleeping around me. It is the night before a "battle." The enemy, Fredericksburg, and its mighty entrenchments lie before us — the river between. At to-morrow's dawn our troops will essay to cross and the guns of the enemy will sweep their frail bridges at every breath. The moon is shining through the soft haze with a brightness almost prophetic; for the last half-hour I have stood alone in the awful stillness of its glimmering light gazing upon the strange, sad scene around me striving to say, "Thy will, O God, be done." The camp-fires blaze with unwonted brightness, the sentry's tread is still but quick, the scores of little shelter tents are dark and still as death; no wonder, for, as I gazed sorrowfully upon them, I thought I could almost hear the slow flap of the grim messenger's wings as one by one he sought and selected his victims for the morning's sacrifice.

Sleep, weary ones, sleep and rest for to-morrow's toil! Oh, sleep and visit in dreams once more the loved ones nestling at home! They may yet live to dream of you, cold, lifeless, and bloody; but this dream, soldier, is thy last; paint it brightly, dream it well. Oh, Northern mothers, wives, and sisters, all unconscious of the peril of the hour, would to Heaven that I could bear for you the concentrated woe which is so soon to follow; would that Christ would teach my soul a prayer that would plead to the Father for grace sufficient for you all! God pity and strengthen you every one.

Mine are not the only waking hours; the light yet burns brightly in our kind-hearted General's tent, where

he pens what may be a last farewell to his wife and children, and thinks sadly of his fated men. Already the roll of the moving artillery is sounding in my ears. The battle draws near and I must catch one hour's sleep for to-day's labor.

Good-night, and Heaven grant you strength for your more peaceful and terrible, but not less weary, days than mine.

CLARA

All her apprehensions were less than the truth. It was a terrible battle, and a disheartening disaster. The Union army lost 1284 in killed, 9600 wounded, and 1769 missing. The memories of Fredericksburg remained with her distinct and terrible to the day of her death. She described the battle and the events which followed it in her war lectures:

We found ourselves beside a broad, muddy river, and a little canvas city grew up in a night upon its banks. And there we sat and waited "while the world wondered." Ay, it did more than wonder! It murmured, it grumbled, it cried shame, to sit there and shiver under the canvas. "Cross over the river and occupy those brick houses on the other shore!" The murmurs grew to a clamor!

Our gallant leader heard them and his gentle heart grew sore as he looked upon his army that he loved as it loved him and looked upon those fearful sights beyond. Carelessness or incapacity at the capital had baffled his best-laid plans till time had made his foes a wall of adamant. Still the country murmured. You, friends, have not forgotten how, for these were the dark days of old Fredericksburg, and our little canvas city was Falmouth.

Finally, one soft, hazy winter's day the army prepared for an attack; but there was neither boat nor bridge, and the sluggish tide rolled dark between.



The men of Hooker and Franklin were right and left, but here in the center came the brave men of the silvery-haired Sumner.

Drawn up in line they wait in the beautiful grounds of the stately mansion whose owner, Lacy, had long sought the other side, and stood that day aiming engines of destruction at the home of his youth and the graves of his household.

There on the second portico I stood and watched the engineers as they moved forward to construct a pontoon bridge. It will be remembered that the rebel army occupying the heights of Fredericksburg previous to the attack was very cautious about revealing the position of its guns.

A few boats were fastened and the men marched quickly on with timbers and planks. For a few rods it proved a success, and scarcely could the impatient troops be restrained from rending the air with shouts of triumph.

On marches the little band with brace and plank, but never to be laid by them. A rain of musket balls has swept their ranks and the brave fellows lie level with the bridge or float down the stream.

No living thing stirs on the opposite bank. No enemy is in sight. Whence comes this rain of death?

Maddened by the fate of their comrades, others seize the work and march onward to their doom. For now, the balls are hurling thick and fast, not only at the bridge, but over and beyond to the limit of their range — crashing through the trees, the windows and doors of the Lacy house. And ever here and there a man drops in the waiting ranks, silently as a snowflake. And his comrades bear him in for help, or back for a grave.

There on the lower bank under a slouched hat stands the man of honest heart and genial face that a soldier could love and honor even through defeat. The ever-trusted, gallant Burnside. Hark — that deep-toned or-

der rising above the heads of his men: "Bring the guns to bear and shell them out."

Then rolled the thunder and the fire. For two long hours the shot and shell hurled through the roofs and leveled the spires of Fredericksburg. Then the little band of engineers resumed its work, but ere ten spaces of the bridge were gained, they fell like grass before the scythe.

For an instant all stand aghast; then ran the murmurs: "The cellars are filled with sharp-shooters and our shell will never reach them."

But once more over the heads of his men rose that deep-toned order: "*Man the boats.*"

Into the boats like tigers then spring the 7th Michigan.

"Row!! Row!! Ply for your lives, boys." And they do. But mark! They fall, some into the boats, some out. Other hands seize the oars and strain and tug with might and main. Oh, how slow the seconds drag! How long we have held our breath.

Almost across — under the bluffs — and out of range! Thank God — they'll land!

Ah, yes; but not all. Mark the windows and doors of those houses above them. See the men swarming from them armed to the teeth and rushing to the river.

They've reached the bluffs above the boats. Down point the muskets. Ah, that rain of shot and shell and flame!

Out of the boats waist-deep in the water; straight through the fire. Up, up the bank the boys in blue! Grimly above, that line of gray!

Down pours the shot. Up, up the blue, till hand to hand like fighting demons they wrestle on the edge.

Can we breathe yet? No! Still they struggle. Ah, yes, they break, they fly, up through the street and out of sight, pursuer and pursued.

It were long to tell of that night crossing and the next terrible day of fire and blood. And when the battle broke

o'er field and grove, like a resistless flood daylight exposed Fredericksburg with its fourth-day flag of truce, its dead, starving, and wounded, frozen to the ground. The wounded were brought to me, frozen, for days after, and our commissions and their supplies at Washington with no effective organization or power to go beyond! The many wounded lay, uncared for, on the cold snow.

Although the Lacy house was exposed to fire she was not permitted to remain within the shelter of its walls. While the fight was at its hottest, she crossed the river under fire for a place of greater danger and of greater need:

At ten o'clock of the battle day when the rebel fire was hottest, the shell rolling down every street, and the bridge under the heavy cannonade, a courier dashed over and, rushing up the steps of the Lacy house, placed in my hand a crumpled, bloody slip of paper, a request from the lion-hearted old surgeon on the opposite shore, establishing his hospitals in the very jaws of death.

The uncouth penciling said: "Come to me. Your place is here."

The faces of the rough men working at my side, which eight weeks ago had flushed with indignation at the very thought of being controlled by a woman, grew ashy white as they guessed the nature of the summons, and the lips which had cursed and pouted in disgust trembled as they begged me to send them, but save myself. I could only permit them to go with me if they chose, and in twenty minutes we were rocking across the swaying bridge, the water hissing with shot on either side.

Over into that city of death, its roofs riddled by shell, its very church a crowded hospital, every street a battle-line, every hill a rampart, every rock a fortress, and every stone wall a blazing line of forts!

Oh, what a day's work was that! How those long lines

of blue, rank upon rank, charged over the open acres, up to the very mouths of those blazing guns, and how like grain before the sickle they fell and melted away.

An officer stepped to my side to assist me over the débris at the end of the bridge. While our hands were raised in the act of stepping down, a piece of an exploding shell hissed through between us, just below our arms, carrying away a portion of both the skirts of his coat and my dress, rolling along the ground a few rods from us like a harmless pebble into the water.

The next instant a solid shot thundered over our heads, a noble steed bounded in the air, and, with his gallant rider, rolled in the dirt, not thirty feet in the rear! Leaving the kind-hearted officer, I passed on alone to the hospital. In less than a half-hour he was brought to me — dead.

I mention these circumstances not as specimens of my own bravery. Oh, no! I beg you will not place that construction upon them, for I never professed anything beyond ordinary courage, and a thousand times preferred safety to danger.

But I mention them that those of you, who have never seen a battle, may the better realize the perils through which these brave men passed, who for four long years bore their country's bloody banner in the face of death, and stood, a living wall of flesh and blood, between the invading traitor and your peaceful homes.

In the afternoon of Sunday an officer came hurriedly to tell me that in a church across the way lay one of his men shot in the face the day before. His wounds were bleeding slowly and, the blood drying and hardening about his nose and mouth, he was in immediate danger of suffocation.

(Friends, this may seem to you repulsive, but I assure you that many a brave and beautiful soldier has died of this alone.)

Seizing a basin of water and a sponge, I ran to the



church, to find the report only too true. Among hundreds of comrades lay my patient. For any human appearance above his head and shoulders, it might as well have been anything but a man.

I knelt by him and commenced with fear and trembling lest some unlucky movement close the last aperture for breath. After some hours' labor, I began to recognize features. They seemed familiar. With what impatience I wrought. Finally my hand wiped away the last obstruction. An eye opened, and there to my gaze was the sexton of my old home church!

I have remarked that every house was a hospital. Passing from one to another during the tumult of Saturday, I waited for a regiment of infantry to sweep on its way to the heights. Being alone, and the only woman visible among that moving sea of men, I naturally attracted the attention of the old veteran, Provost Marshal General Patrick, who, mistaking me for a resident of the city who had remained in her home until the crashing shot had driven her into the street, dashed through the waiting ranks to my side, and, bending down from his saddle, said in his kindest tones, "You are alone and in great danger, Madam. Do you want protection?"

Amused at his gallant mistake, I humored it by thanking him, as I turned to the ranks, adding that I believed myself the best protected woman in the United States.

The soldiers near me caught my words, and responding with "That's so! That's so!" set up a cheer. This in turn was caught by the next line and so on, line after line, till the whole army joined in the shout, no one knowing what he was cheering at, but never doubting there was a victory somewhere. The gallant old General, taking in the situation, bowed low his bared head, saying, as he galloped away, "I believe you are right, Madam."

It would be difficult for persons in ordinary life to realize the troubles arising from want of space merely for wounded men to occupy when gathered together for

surgical treatment and care. You may suggest that "all out-of-doors" ought to be large, and so it would seem, but the fact did not always prove so. Civilized men seek shelter in sickness, and of this there was ever a scarcity.

Twelve hundred men were crowded into the Lacy house, which contained but twelve rooms. They covered every foot of the floors and porticoes, and even lay on the stair landings! A man who could find opportunity to lie between the legs of a table thought himself lucky: he was not likely to be stepped on. In a common cupboard, with four shelves, five men lay, and were fed and attended. Three lived to be removed, and two died of their wounds.

Think of trying to lie still and die quietly, lest you fall out of a bed six feet high!

Among the wounded of the 7th Michigan was one Faulkner, of Ashtabula County, Ohio, a mere lad, shot through the lungs and, to all appearances, dying. When brought in, he could swallow nothing, breathed painfully, and it was with great difficulty that he gave me his name and residence. He could not lie down, but sat leaning against the wall in the corner of the room.

I observed him carefully as I hurried past from one room to another, and finally thought he had ceased to breathe. At this moment another man with a similar wound was taken in on a stretcher by his comrades, who sought in vain for a spot large enough to lay him down, and appealed to me. I could only tell them that when that poor boy in the corner was removed, they could set him down in his place. They went to remove him, but, to the astonishment of all, he objected, opened his eyes, and persisted in retaining his corner, which he did for some two weeks, when, finally, a mere bundle of skin and bones, for he gave small evidence of either flesh or blood, he was wrapped in a blanket and taken away in an ambulance to Washington, with a bottle of milk punch in his blouse, the only nourishment he could take.

On my return to Washington, three months later, a messenger came from Lincoln Hospital to say that the men of Ward 17 wanted to see me. I returned with him, and as I entered the ward seventy men saluted me, standing, such as could, others rising feebly in their beds, and falling back — exhausted with the effort.

Every man had left his blood in Fredericksburg — every one was from the Lacy house. My hand had dressed every wound — many of them in the first terrible moments of agony. I had prepared their food in the snow and winds of December and fed them like children.

How dear they had grown to me in their sufferings, and the three great cheers that greeted my entrance into that hospital ward were dearer than the applause. I would not exchange their memory for the wildest hurrahs that ever greeted the ear of conqueror or king. When the first greetings were over and the agitation had subsided somewhat, a young man walked up to me with no apparent wound, with bright complexion, and in good flesh. There was certainly something familiar in his face, but I could not recall him, until, extending his hand with a smile, he said, "I am Riley Faulkner, of the 7th Michigan. I did n't die, and the milk punch lasted all the way to Washington!"

The author once inquired of Miss Barton how she dressed for these expeditions. She dressed simply, she said, so that she could get about easily, but her costume did not greatly differ from that of the ordinary woman of the period. She added humorously that her wardrobe was not wholly a matter of choice. Her clothes underwent such hard usage that nothing lasted very long, and she was glad to wear almost anything she could get.

This was not wholly satisfactory, for those were the days of hoop-skirts and other articles of feminine attire

which had no possible place in her work. From Mrs. Vassall the author obtained somewhat more explicit information. She said:

When Clara went to the front, she dressed in a plain black print skirt with a jacket. She wished to dress so that she could easily get about and not consume much time in dressing. Her clothing received hard usage, and when she returned from any campaign to Washington, she was in need of a new outfit. At one time the women of Oxford sent her a box for her own personal use. Friends in Oxford furnished the material, and Annie Childs made the dresses. The box was delivered at her room during her absence, and she returned from the field, weary and wet, her hair soaked and falling down her back, and entered her cold and not very cheerful room. There she found this box with its complete outfit, and kneeling beside it she burst into happy tears.

The author counts it especially fortunate that he has been able to find a letter from Clara relating to this very experience, which was on the occasion of her return from the battle of Fredericksburg. It was addressed to Annie Childs, and dated four months later:

PORT ROYAL, May 28th, 1863

MY DEAR ANNIE:

I remember, four long months ago, one cold, dreary, windy day, I dragged me out from a chilly street-car that had found me ankle-deep in the mud of the 6th Street wharf, and up the slippery street and my long flights of stairs into a room, cheerless, in confusion, and alone, looking in most respects as I had left it some months before, with the exception of a mysterious *box* which stood unopened in the middle of the floor. All things looked strange to me, for in that few months I had taken in so much that yet I had no clear views. The



great artist had been at work upon my brain and sketched it all over with life scenes, and death scenes, never to be erased. The fires of *Fredericksburg* still blazed before my eyes, and her cannon still thundered at my ear, while away down in the depths of my heart I was smothering the groans and treasuring the prayers of her dead and dying heroes; worn, weak, and heartsick, I was *home from Fredericksburg*; and when, there, for the first time I looked at myself, shoeless, gloveless, ragged, and blood-stained, a new sense of desolation and pity and sympathy and weariness, all blended, swept over me with irresistible force, and, perfectly overpowered, I sank down upon the strange box, unquestioning its presence or import, and wept as I had never done since the soft, hazy, winter night that saw our attacking guns silently stealing their approach to the river, ready at the dawn to ring out the shout of death to the waiting thousands at their wheels.

I said I wept, and so I did, and gathered strength and calmness and consciousness — and finally the *strange box*, which had afforded me my *first rest*, began to claim my attention; it was clearly and handsomely marked to myself at Washington, and came by express — so much for the outside; and a few pries with a hatchet, to hands as well accustomed as mine, soon made the inside as visible, only for the neat paper which covered all. It was doubtless something sent to some soldier; pity I had not had it earlier — it might be too late now; he might be past his wants or the kind remembrances of the loved ones at home. The while I was busy in removing the careful paper wrappings a letter, addressed to me, opened — “*From friends in Oxford and Worcester*” — no signature. Mechanically I commenced lifting up, one after another, hoods, shoes, boots, gloves, skirts, handkerchiefs, collars, linen, — and that beautiful dress! look at it, all made — who — ! Ah, there is no mistaking the workmanship — Annie’s scissors shaped and her skill-

ful fingers fitted that. Now, I begin to comprehend; while I had been away in the snows and frosts and rains and mud of Falmouth, forgetting my friends, myself, to eat or sleep or rest, forgetting everything but my God and the poor suffering victims around me, these dear, kind friends, undismayed and not disheartened by the great national calamity which had overtaken them, mourning, perhaps, the loss of their own, had remembered *me*, and with open hearts and willing hands had prepared this noble, thoughtful gift for me at my return. It was too much, and this time, burying my face in the dear tokens around me, I wept again as heartily as before, but with very different sensations; a new chord was struck; my labors, slight and imperfect as they had been, had been appreciated; I was not alone; and then and there again I re-dedicated myself to my little work of humanity, pledging before God all that I *have*, all that I *am*, all that I *can*, and all that I *hope* to be, to the cause of *Justice* and *Mercy* and *Patriotism*, my *Country*, and my *God*. And cheered and sustained as I have been by the kind remembrances of old friends, the cordial greeting of new ones, and the tearful, grateful blessings of the thousands of noble martyrs to whose relief or comfort it has been my blessed privilege to add my mite, I feel that my cup of happiness is more than full. It is an untold privilege to have lived in this day when there is work to be done, and, still more, to possess health and strength to do it, and most of all to feel that I bear with me the kindly feelings and perhaps prayers of the noble mothers and sisters who have sent sons and brothers to fight the battles of the world in the armies of Freedom. Annie, if it is not asking too much, now that I have gathered up resolution enough to speak of the subject at all (for I have never been able to before), I would like to know *to whom* besides yourself I am indebted for these beautiful and valuable gifts. It is too tame and too little to say that I am thankful for them. You did not *want that*,

but I will say that, God willing, I will *yet wear them where none of the noble donors would be ashamed to have them seen*. Some of those gifts shall yet see service if Heaven spare my life. With thanks I am the friend of my "Friends in Oxford and Worcester."

CLARA BARTON

## CHAPTER XV

### CLARA BARTON'S CHANGE OF BASE

#### SPRING OF 1863

THE events we have been describing bring Miss Barton to the end of 1862. The greater part of the year 1863 was spent by her in entirely different surroundings. Believing that the most significant military events of that year would be found in connection with a campaign against Charleston, South Carolina, and that the Army of the Potomac, which she had thus far accompanied, was reasonably well cared for in provisions which were in large degree the result of her establishment, she began to consider the advisability of going farther south.

Her reasons for this were partly military and partly personal. The military aspect of the situation was that she learned in Washington that the region about Charleston was likely to be the place of largest service during the year 1863. On the personal side was first her great desire to establish communication with her brother Stephen, who still was in North Carolina. When Charleston was captured, the army could move on into the interior. If she were somewhere near, she could have a part in the rescue of her brother, and she had reason to believe that he might have need of her service after his long residence within the bounds of the Confederacy. Her brother David received a commission in the Quartermaster's Department, and he was sent to Hilton Head in the vicinity of Charleston. Her cousin, Corporal Leander T. Poor, in the Engineers' Department, was assigned



there, partly through her influence. It seemed as though that field promised to her every possible opportunity for public and private usefulness. There she could most largely serve her country; there she could have the companionship of her brother David and her cousin, Leander Poor; there she could most probably establish communications with Stephen, who might be in great need of her assistance. It is difficult to see how in the circumstances she could have planned with greater apparent wisdom. If in any respect the outcome failed to justify her expectations, it was because she was no wiser with respect to the military developments of the year 1863 than were the highest officials in Washington. Her request for permission to go to Port Royal was written early in 1863, and was addressed to the Assistant Secretary of War.

This request was promptly granted, and she was soon planning for a change of scene. The first three months of 1863, however, were spent in Washington, and we have few glimpses of her activities. In the middle of January she rejoined the army, acting on information which led her to believe that a battle was impending.

It should be stated that Clara Barton's diaries are most fragmentary where there is most to record. She was much given to writing, and, when she had time, enjoyed recording in detail almost everything that happened. She was accustomed to record the names of her callers, and the persons from whom she received, and those to whom she sent, letters; her purchases with the cost of each; her receipts and expenditures; her repairs to her wardrobe, and innumerable other little items; but a large proportion of the most significant events in her public life are not recorded in her diaries, or, if recorded

at all, are merely set down in catchwords, and the details are given, if at all, in her letters. Of this expedition in the winter of 1863 we have no word either in her diary, which she probably left in Washington, or in her letters which she may have been too busy to write, or which, if written, have not been preserved. Our knowledge of her departure upon this expedition is contained in a letter from her nephew Samuel Barton:

SURGEON-GENERAL'S OFFICE  
WASHINGTON CITY, D.C., January 18th, 1863

MY DEAR COUSIN MARY:

Your very acceptable letter, with Ada's and Ida's, was received last Thursday evening. I could not answer sooner, for I have been quite busy evenings ever since it was received. Aunt Clara left the city this morning for the army. Her friend, Colonel Rucker, the Assistant Quartermaster-General, told her last Thursday that the army were about to move and they were expecting a fight and wanted her to go if she felt able, so this morning she, Mr. Welles, who always goes with her to the battles, and Mr. Doe, a Massachusetts man, took the steamboat for Acquia Creek, where they will take the cars for Falmouth and there join the army. Colonel Rucker gave her two new tents, and bread, flour, meal, and a new stove, and requested her to telegraph to him for anything she wanted and he would send it to her. Aunt Sally left for Massachusetts last Thursday evening. . . .

SAM BARTON

In the State House in Boston is the battle-flag of the 21st Massachusetts, stained with the blood of Sergeant Thomas Plunkett. Both his arms were shot away in the battle of Fredericksburg, but he planted the flagstaff between his feet and upheld the flag with his two shattered stumps of arms. Massachusetts has few relics so

precious as this flag. Clara Barton was with him at Fredericksburg and ministered to him there, and remained his lifelong friend. In many ways she manifested her interest in him, rendering her aid in a popular movement which secured him a purse of \$4000. Sergeant Plunkett was in need of a pension, and Clara Barton addressed to the Senate's Committee on Military Affairs a memorial on his behalf. It was written on Washington's Birthday, after her return from the field:

WASHINGTON, D.C., Feb. 22nd, '63

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE  
MILITARY COMMITTEE, U.S. SENATE.  
SENATORS:

Nothing less than a strong conviction of duty owed to one of the brave defenders of our Nation's honor could induce me to intrude for a moment upon the already burdened, and limited term of action yet remaining to your honorable body.

During the late Battle of Fredericksburg, the 21st Massachusetts Regiment of Volunteers were ordered to charge upon a battery across an open field; in the terrible fire which assailed them, the colors were three times in quick succession bereft of their support; the third time they were seized by Sergeant Thomas Plunkett, of Company E, and borne over some three hundred yards of open space, when a shell from the enemy's battery in its murderous course killed three men of the regiment and shattered both arms of the Sergeant. He could no longer support the colors upright, but, planting his foot against the staff, he endeavored to hold them up, while he strove by his shouts amid the confusion to attract attention to their condition; for some minutes he sustained them against his right arm torn and shattered just below the shoulder, while the blood poured over and among the sacred folds, literally obliterating the *stripes*, leaving as

fit emblem of such heroic sacrifice only the *crimson and the stars*. Thus drenched in blood, and rent by the fury of eight battles, the noble standard could be no longer borne, and, while its gallant defender lay suffering in field hospital from amputation of *both* arms, it was reverently wrapped by Colonel Clark and returned to the State House in Boston, with the request that others might be sent them; the 21st had never lost their colors, but they had worn them out.

The old flag and its brave bearer are alike past their usefulness save as examples for emulation and titles of glory for some bright page of our Nation's history, and, while the one is carefully treasured in the sacred archives of the State, need I more than ask of this noble body to put forth its protecting arm to shelter, cherish, and sustain the other? If guaranty were needful for the private character of so true a *soldier*, it would have been found in the touching address of his eloquent Colonel (Clark) delivered on Christmas beside the stretcher waiting at the train at Falmouth to convey its helpless burden to the car, whither he had been escorted not only by his regiment, but his *General*. The tears which rolled over the veteran cheeks around him were ample testimony of the love and respect he had won from them, and to-day his heart's deepest affections twine round his gallant regiment as the defenders of their country.

A moment's reflection will obviate the necessity of any suggestions in reference to the provisions needful for his future support; it is only to be remembered that he can nevermore be unattended, a common doorknob is henceforth as formidable to him as a prison bolt. His little pension as a Sergeant would not remunerate an attendant for placing his food in his mouth, to say nothing of how it shall be obtained for *both* of them.

For the sake of formality merely, for to you gentlemen I know the appeal is needless, I will close by praying your honorable body to grant to Sergeant Plunkett such



pension as shall in your noble wisdom be ample for his future necessities and a fitting tribute to his patriotic sacrifice.

C. B.

The assignment of her brother David to duty in the vicinity of Charleston was the event which decided her to ask for a transfer to that field, or rather for permission to go there with supplies.

It must be remembered that Miss Barton's service was a voluntary service. She was not an army nurse, and had no intention of becoming one. The system of army nurses was under the direct supervision of Dorothea Lynde Dix, a woman from her own county, and one for whom she cherished feelings of the highest regard, but under whom she had no intention of working. Indeed, it is one of the fine manifestations of good sense on the part of Clara Barton that she never at any time attempted what might have seemed an interference with Miss Dix, but found for herself a field of service, and developed it according to a method of her own. It will be well at this time to give some account of Miss Dix, and a little outline of her great work in its relation to that of Clara Barton.

Dorothea Lynde Dix was born April 4, 1802, and died July 17, 1887. She was twenty-nine years older than Clara Barton, and their lives had many interesting parallels. Until the publication of her biography by Francis Tiffany in 1890, it was commonly supposed that she was born in Worcester County, Massachusetts, where she spent her childhood. But her birth occurred in Maine. Unlike Clara Barton she had no happy home memories. Her father was an unstable, visionary man, and it was

on one of his frequent and futile migrations that she was born. Her biographer states that her childhood memories were so painful that "in no hour of the most confidential intimacy could she be induced to unlock the silence which, to the very end of life, she maintained as to all the incidents of her early days." She had no happy memories of association with school or church, or sympathetic friends. The background of her childhood memory was of poverty with a lack of public respect for a father who, though of good family, led an aimless, shiftless, wandering life. Unhappily, he was a religious fanatic, associated with no church, but issuing tracts which he paid for with money that should have been used for his children, and, to save expense, required her to paste or stitch. She hated the employment and the type of religion which it represented. She broke away from it almost violently and went to live with her grandmother in Boston.

There she fell under the influence of William Ellery Channing, and was born again. To her through his ministry came the spirit that quickened and gave life to her dawning hope and aspiration.

How she got her education we hardly know, but she began teaching, as Clara Barton did, when she was fifteen years of age. And like Clara Barton she became a pioneer in certain forms of educational work. Dorothea Dix opened a school "for charitable and religious uses," above her grandmother's barn, and in time she inherited property which made her independent, so that she was able to devote herself to a life of philanthropy.

In 1837, being then thirty-five years of age, and encouraged by her pastor, Dr. Channing, in whose home she spent much of her time, she launched forth upon her

career of devotion to the amelioration of the condition of convicts, lunatics, and paupers. In her work for the insane she was especially effective. She traveled in nearly all of the States of the Union, pleading for effective legislation to promote the establishment of asylums for the insane. Like Clara Barton she found an especially fruitful field of service in New Jersey; the Trenton Asylum was in a very real sense her creation. The pauper, the prisoner, and especially the insane of our whole land owe her memory a debt of lasting gratitude.

By 1861 her reputation was well established. She was then almost sixty years of age and had gained the well-merited confidence of the medical profession. She was on her way from Boston to Washington, and was spending a few days at the Trenton Asylum, when the Sixth Massachusetts was fired upon in Baltimore on April 19, 1861. Like Clara Barton she hastened immediately to the place of service. On the very next day she wrote to a friend: "I think my duty lies near military hospitals for the present. This need not be announced. I have reported myself and some nurses for free service at the War Department, and to the Surgeon-General."

Her offer was accepted with great heartiness and with ill-considered promptness. She was appointed "Superintendent of Female Nurses." She was authorized "to select and assign female nurses to general or permanent military hospitals; they not to be employed without her sanction and approval except in case of urgent need."

Whether the United States contained any woman better qualified to undertake such a task as this than Dorothea Dix may be questioned. Certainly none could have been found with more of experience or with a higher

consecration. It was an impossible task for any one, and, while Miss Dix was possessed of some of the essential qualities, she did not possess them all. Her biographer very justly says:

The literal meaning, however, of such a commission as had thus been hastily bestowed on Miss Dix — applying, as it did to the women nurses of the military hospitals of the whole United States not in actual rebellion — was one which, in those early days of the war, no one so much as began to take in. . . . Such a commission — as the march of events was before long to prove — involved a sheer, practical impossibility. It implied, not a single-handed woman, nearly sixty and shattered in health, but immense organized departments at twenty different centers.”<sup>1</sup>

The War Department acted upon what must have appeared a wise impulse in turning this whole matter of women nurses over to the authority of a woman known in all the States — as Miss Dix was known — and possessing the confidence of the people of the whole country. But she was not only sixty years of age and predisposed to consumption, and at that time suffering from other ailments, but she had never learned to delegate responsibility to her subordinates. It had been well for Clara Barton if she had known better how to set others to work, but she knew how better than Dorothea Dix and was twenty years younger. Indeed, Clara Barton was younger at eighty than Dorothea Dix was at sixty, but she herself suffered somewhat from this same limitation. Dorothea Dix could not be everywhere, and with her system she needed to be everywhere, just as Clara Barton under her system had to be at the very front in direct

<sup>1</sup> Tiffany, *Life of Dorothea Lynde Dix*, 336, 337.



management of her own line of activities. But Dorothea Dix, besides needing to be simultaneously on twenty battle-fields, had to be where she could examine and sift out and prepare for service the chosen from among a great many thousand women applying for the privilege of nursing wounded soldiers, and ranging all the way from sentimental school-girls to sickly and decrepit grandmothers. Again, Mr. Tiffany says:

Women nurses were volunteering by the thousands, the majority of them without the experience or health to fit them for such arduous service. Who should pass on their qualifications, who station, superintend, and train them? Now, under the Atlas weight of care and responsibilities so suddenly thrust on Miss Dix, the very qualifications which had so preëminently fitted her for the sphere in which she had wrought such miracles of success began to tell against her. She was nearly sixty years old, and with a constitution sapped by malaria, overwork, and pulmonary weakness. She had for years been a lonely and single-handed worker, planning her own projects, keeping her own counsel, and pressing on, unhampered by the need of consulting others, toward her self-chosen goal. The lone worker could not change her nature. She tried to do everything herself, and the feat before long became an impossibility. At length she came to recognize this, again and again exclaiming in her distress, "This is not the work I would have my life judged by."

By that, however, in part her life-work must be judged, and, in the main, greatly to her advantage and wholly to her honor. We can see, however, the inevitable limitations of her work. Up to that time, she had dealt with small groups of subordinates from whom she could demand and secure some approach to perfection of organization and discipline. This she could not possibly secure

in her present situation. Again we quote the discriminating words of her biographer:

But in war — especially in a war precipitately entered into by a raw and inexperienced people — all such perfection of organization and discipline is out of the question. If a good field hospital is not to be had, the best must be made of a bad one. If a skillful surgeon is not at hand, then an incompetent one must hack away after his own butcher fashion. If selfish and greedy attendants eat up and drink up the supplies of delicacies and wines for the sick, then enough more must be supplied to give the sick the fag end of a chance. It is useless to try to idealize war. . . . All this, however, Miss Dix could not bring herself to endure. Ready to live on a crust, and to sacrifice herself without stint, her whole soul was on fire at the spectacles of incompetence and callow indifference she was doomed daily to witness. She became overwrought, and lost the requisite self-control. . . . Inevitably she became involved in sharp altercations with prominent medical officials and with regimental surgeons.<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to recall this in order to understand Clara Barton's attitude toward the established military hospitals. She was not, in any narrow or technical term, a hospital nurse. She stood ready to assist the humblest soldier in any possible need, and to work in any hospital at any task howsoever humble, if that was where she could work to advantage. But she knew the hospitals in and about Washington too well not to appreciate these infelicities. She had no intention whatever of becoming a cog in that great and unmanageable machine.

Clara Barton held Dorothea Dix in the very highest regard. In all her diaries and letters and in her memo-

<sup>1</sup> Tiffany, 338, 339.

randa of conversations which her diaries sometimes contain, there is no word concerning Dorothea Dix that is not appreciative. In 1910 the New York "World" wired her a request that she telegraph to that newspaper, at its expense, a list of eight names of women whom she would nominate for a Woman's Hall of Fame. The eight names which she sent in reply to this request were Abigail Adams, Lucretia Mott, Lucy Stone Blackwell, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frances Dana Gage, Maria Mitchell, Dorothea Dix, and Mary A. Bickerdyke. It was a fine indication of her broad-mindedness that she should have named two women, Dorothea Dix and Mother Bickerdyke, who should have won distinction in her own field and might have been deemed her rivals for popular affection. If Clara Barton was capable of any kind of jealousy, it was not a jealousy that would have thought ever to undermine or belittle a woman like Dorothea Dix. Few women understood so well as Clara Barton what Dorothea Dix had to contend with. Her contemporary references show how fully she honored this noble elder sister, and how loyally she supported her.

At the same time, Clara Barton kept herself well out from under the administration and control of Miss Dix. In some respects the two women were too much alike in their temperament for either one to have worked well under the other. For that matter, neither one of them greatly enjoyed working under anybody. It is at once to the credit of Clara Barton's loyalty and good sense that she went as an independent worker.

But the hospitals in and about Washington were approaching more and more nearly something that might be called system, and that system was the system of

Dorothea Dix. Clara Barton had all the room she wanted on the battle-field. There was no great crowd of women clamoring to go with her when under fire she crossed the bridge at Fredericksburg. But by the spring of 1863 it began to be less certain that there was going to be as much fighting as there had been in the immediate vicinity of Washington. There was a possibility that actual field service with the Army of the Potomac was going to be less, and that the base hospitals with their organized system would be able to care more adequately for the wounded than would the hospitals farther south where the next great crisis seemed to be impending.

These were among the considerations in the mind of Clara Barton when she left the Army of the Potomac — “my own army,” as she lovingly called it — and secured her transfer to Hilton Head, near Charleston.



## CHAPTER XVI

### THE ATTEMPT TO RECAPTURE FORT SUMTER

I AM confounded! Literally speechless with amazement! When I left Washington every one said it boded no peace; it was a bad omen for me to start; I never missed finding the trouble I went to find, and was never late. I thought little of it. This P.M. we neared the dock at Hilton Head and the boat came alongside and boarded us instantly. The first word was, "The first gun is to be fired upon Charleston this P.M. at three o'clock." We drew out watches, and the hands pointed three to the minute. I felt as if I should sink through the deck. I am no fatalist, but it is so singular.

Thus wrote Clara Barton in her journal on Tuesday night, April 7, 1863, the night of her arrival at Port Royal. She had become so expert in learning where there was to be a battle that her friends looked upon her as a kind of stormy petrel and expected trouble as soon as she arrived. She had come to Hilton Head in order to be on hand when the bombardment of Charleston should occur, and the opening guns of the bombardment were her salute as her boat, the Arogo, warped up to the dock. Everything seemed to indicate that she had come at the very moment when she was needed.

But the following Saturday the transports which had loaded recruits at Hilton Head, ready to land and capture Charleston as soon as the guns had done their work, returned to Hilton Head and brought the soldiers back. Her diary that morning recorded that the Arogo returning would stop off at Charleston for dispatches, but her entry that night said:

In the P.M., much to the consternation of everybody, the transports laden with troops all hove in sight. Soon the harbor was literally filled with ships and boats, the wharf crowded with disembarking troops with the camp equipage they had taken with them. What had they returned for? was the question hanging on every lip. Conjecture was rife; all sorts of rumors were afloat; but the one general idea seemed to prevail that the expedition "had fizzled," if any one knows the precise meaning and import of that term. Troops landed all the evening and perhaps all night, and returned to the old camping grounds. The place is alive with soldiers. No one knows why he is here, or why he is not there; all seem disappointed and chagrined, but no one is to blame. For my part, I am rather pleased at the turn it has taken, as I thought from the first that we had "too few troops to fight and too many to be killed." I have seen worse retreats if this be one.

"Fizzled" appears to have been a new word, but the country had abundant opportunity to learn its essential meaning. The expedition against Charleston was one of several that met this inglorious end, and the flag was not raised over Sumter until 1865.

Now followed an interesting chapter in Clara Barton's career, but one quite different from anything she had expected when she came to Hilton Head. After the "fizzle" in early April, the army settled down to general inactivity. Charleston must be attacked simultaneously by land and sea and reduced by heavy artillery fire before the infantry could do anything. There was nothing for Clara Barton to do but to wait for the battle which had been postponed, but was surely coming. She distributed her perishable supplies where they would do the most good, and looked after the comfort of such soldiers as

needed her immediate ministrations. But the wounded were few in number and the sick were in well-established hospitals where she had no occasion to offer her services.

Moreover, she found the situation here very different from what she had seen only a few miles from Washington. There were no muddy roads between Hilton Head and New York Harbor. The Arogo was a shuttle moving back and forward every few days, and in time another boat was added. There was a regular mail service between New York and Hilton Head, and every boat took officers and soldiers going upon, or returning from, furloughs, and the boats from New York brought nurses and supplies. The Sanitary Commission had its own dépôt of supplies and a liberal fund of money from which purchases could be made of fruits and such other local delicacies as were procurable. It is true, as Miss Barton was afterward to learn, that the hospital management left something to be desired, and that fewer delicacies were purchased than could have been. But that was distinctly not her responsibility, nor did she for one moment assume it to be such. She came into conflict with official red tape quite soon enough in her own department, without intruding where she did not belong. She settled down to await the time when she should be needed for the special work that had brought her to Hilton Head. That time came, but it did not come soon, and its delay was the occasion of very mixed emotions on her part.

Clara Barton came to Hilton Head with a reputation already established. She no longer needed to be introduced, nor was there any difficulty in her procuring passes to go where she pleased, excepting as she was

sometimes refused out of consideration for her own personal safety. But not once while she was in Carolina was she asked to show her passes. When she landed, she found provision made for her at regimental headquarters. Colonel J. G. Elwell, of Cleveland, to whom she reported, was laid up at this time with a broken leg. She had him for a patient and his gratitude continued through all the subsequent years. Her journal described him as a noble, Christian gentleman, and she found abundant occasion to admire his manliness, his Christian character, his affection for his wife and children, his courtesy to her, and later, his heroism as she witnessed it upon the battle-field. The custody of her supplies brought her into constant relations with the Chief Quartermaster, Captain Samuel T. Lamb, for whom she cherished a regard almost if not quite as high as that she felt for Colonel, afterward General, Elwell. Her room was at headquarters, under the same roof with these and other brave officers, who vied with each other in bestowing honors and kindnesses upon her. As Colonel Elwell was incapacitated for service, she saw him daily, and the care of her supplies gave her scarcely less constant association with Captain Lamb. General Hunter called upon her, paid her high compliments, issued her passes and permits, and offered her every possible courtesy. Her request that her cousin, Corporal Leander Poor, be transferred to the department over which her brother David presided, met an immediate response. The nurses from the hospital paid her an official call, and apparently spoke very gracious words to her, for she indicates that she was pleased with something they said or did. Different officers sent her bouquets; her table and her window must



have been rather constantly filled with flowers. More than once the band serenaded her, and between the musical numbers there was a complimentary address which embarrassed, even more than it pleased her, in which a high tribute was paid "To Clara Barton, the Florence Nightingale of America."

The officers at headquarters had good saddle horses, and invited her to ride with them. If there was any form of exercise which she thoroughly enjoyed, it was horse-back riding. She procured a riding-skirt and sent for her sidesaddle, which the Arogo in due time brought to her. So far nothing could have been more delightful. The very satisfaction of it made her uncomfortable. She hoped that God would not hold her accountable for misspent time, and said so in her diary.

Lest she should waste her time, she began teaching some negro boys to read, and sought out homesick soldiers who needed comfort. Whenever she heard of any danger or any likelihood of a battle anywhere within reach, she conferred with Colonel Elwell about going there. He was a religious man, and she discussed with him the interposition of Divine Providence, and the apparent indication that she was following a Divine call in coming to Hilton Head exactly when she did. But no field opened immediately which called for her ministrations. She felt sometimes that it would be a terrible mistake if she had come so far away from what really was her duty, when she wrote: "God is great and fearfully just. Truly it is a fearful thing to fall into His hands; His ways are past finding out." Still she could not feel responsible for the fact that no great battle had occurred in her immediate vicinity. Each time the Arogo

dropped anchor, she wondered if she ought to return on her; but each time it seemed certain that it was not going to be very long until there was a battle. So she left the matter in God's hands. She wrote: "It will be wisely ordered, and I shall do all for the best in the end. God's will, not mine, be done. I am content. How I wish I could always keep in full view the fact and feeling that God orders all things precisely as they should be; all is best as it is."

On Sunday she read Beecher's sermons and sometimes copied religious poetry for Colonel Elwell, who, in addition to his own disability, had tender memories of the death of his little children, and many solicitous thoughts for his wife.

In some respects she was having the time of her life. A little group of women, wives of the officers, gathered at the headquarters, and there grew up a kind of social usage. One evening when a group of officers and officers' wives were gathered together, one of the ladies read a poem in honor of Clara Barton. One day, at General Hunter's headquarters and in his presence, Colonel Elwell presented her with a beautiful pocket Bible on behalf of the officers. If she needed anything to increase her fame, that need was supplied when Mr. Page, correspondent of the New York "Tribune," whom she remembered to have met at the Lacy house during the battle of Fredericksburg, arrived at Hilton Head, and he, who had seen every battle of the Army of the Potomac except Chancellorsville, told the officers how he had heard General Patrick, at the battle of Fredericksburg, remonstrate with Miss Barton on account of her exposing herself to danger, saying afterward that he ex-

pected to see her shot every minute. The band of a neighboring regiment came over and serenaded her. Her windows were filled with roses and orange blossoms, and she wrote in her diary: "I do not deserve such friends as I find, and how can I deserve them? I fear that in these later years our Heavenly Father is too merciful to me."

It would have been delightful if she could only have been sure that she was doing her duty. Surrounded by appreciative friends, bedecked with flowers, serenaded and sung to, and with a saddled horse at her door almost every morning and at least one officer if not a dozen eager for the joy and honor of a ride with her, only two things disturbed her. The first was that she still had no word from Stephen, and the other was the feeling that, unless the Lord ordained a battle in her vicinity before long, she ought to be back with what she called "my own army."

Clara Barton's diary displays utter freedom from cant. She was not given to putting her religious feelings and emotions down on paper. But in this period she gave much larger space to her own reflections than was her custom when more fully occupied. She was feeling in a marked degree the providential aspects of her own life; she was discussing with Christian officers their plans for what Colonel Elwell called his "soldier's church." Her religious nature found expression in her diary more adequately than she had usually had time to express.

Toward the end of her period of what since has been termed her watchful waiting, she received a letter from a friend, an editor, who felt that the war had gone on quite long enough, and who wished her to use her in-

fluence in favor of an immediate peace. Few people wanted peace more than Clara Barton, but her letter in answer to this request shows an insight into the national situation which at that time could hardly have been expected:

HILTON HEAD, S.C., June 24th, 1863

T. W. MEIGHAN, ESQ.,

My kind friend, your welcome letter of the 6th has been some days in hand. I did not get "frightened." I am a *U.S. soldier*, you know, and therefore not supposed to be susceptible to *fear*, and, as *I am* merely a *soldier*, and not a *statesman*, I shall make no attempt at discussing *political* points with you. You have spoken openly and frankly, and I have perused your letter and considered your sentiments with interest, and, I believe, with sincerity and candor, and, while I observe with pain the wide difference of *opinion* existing between us, I cannot find it in my heart to believe it *more* than a matter of *opinion*. I shall not take to myself more of honesty of purpose, faithfulness of zeal, or patriotism, than I award to you. I have not, aye! never shall forget *where I first found you*. The soldier who has stood in the ranks of my country's armies, and toiled and marched and fought, and fallen and struggled and risen, but to fall again more worn and exhausted than before, until *my* weak arm had greater strength than his, and could aid him, and yet made no complaint, and only left the ranks of death when he had no longer strength to stand up in them — is it for *me* to rise up in judgment and accuse *this man* of a *want of patriotism*? True, he does not see as I see, and works in a channel *in* which I have no confidence, *with* which I have no sympathy, and *through* which I could not go; still, I must believe that in the end the same *results* which would gladden my heart would rejoice his.

Where you in prospective see *peace*, glorious, coveted



peace, and rest for our tired armies, and home and happiness and firesides and friends for our war-worn heroes, *I* see only the *beginning of war*. If we should make overtures for "peace upon any terms," then, I fear, would follow a code of terms to which no civilized nation could submit and present even an honorable existence among nations. God forbid that *I* should ask the useless exposure of the life of *one* man, the desolation of one more home; I never for a moment lose sight of the mothers and sisters, and white-haired fathers, and children moving quietly about, and dropping the unseen, silent tear in those far-away saddened homes, and I have too often wiped the gathering damp from pale, anxious brows, and caught from ashy, quivering lips the last faint whispers of home, not to realize the terrible cost of these separations; nor has morbid sympathy been all, — out amid the smoke and fire and thunder of our guns, with only the murky canopy above, and the bloody ground beneath, I have wrought day after day and night after night, my heart well-nigh to bursting with conflicting emotions, so sorry for the necessity, so glad for the *opportunity* of ministering with my own hands and strength to the dying wants of the patriot martyrs who fell for their country and mine. If my poor life could have purchased theirs, how cheerfully and quickly would the exchange have been made; more than this I could not do, deeper than this I could not feel, and yet among it all it has never once been in my heart, or on my lips, to sue to our enemies for peace. First, they broke it without cause; last, they will not restore it without shame. True, we *may* never find peace by *fighting*, certainly we never shall by *asking*. "Independence?" They always *had* their independence till they madly threw it away; if there *be* a chain on them to-day it is of their own riveting. I grant that our Government has made mistakes, sore ones, too, in some instances, but ours is a *human government*, and like *all* human opera-

tions liable to mistakes; only the machinery and plans of Heaven move unerringly and we short-sighted mortals are, half our time, fain to complain of these. I would that so much of wisdom and foresight and strength and power fall to our rulers as would show them to-morrow the path to victory and peace, but we shall never strengthen their hands or incite their patriotism by deserting and upbraiding them. To *my* unsophisticated mind, the Government of my country *is* my country, and the *people* of my country, the Government of my country as nearly as a representative system will allow. I have taught me to look upon our "Government" as the band which the people bind around the bundle of sticks to hold it firm, where every patriot hand must grasp the knot the tighter, and our "Constitution" as a symmetrical framework unsheltered and unprotected, around which the people must rally, and brace and stay themselves among its inner timbers, and lash and bind and nail and rivet themselves to its outer posts, till in its sheltered strength it bids defiance to every elemental jar, — till the winds cannot rack, the sunshine warp, or the rains rot, and I would to Heaven that so we rallied and stood to-day. If our Government is "*too weak*" to act vigorously and energetically, *strengthen it till it can*. Then comes the peace we all wait for as kings and prophets waited, — and without which, like them, we seek and never find.

Pardon me, my good friend, I had never thought to speak at this length, or, indeed, *any* length upon this strangely knotted subject, so entirely out of my line. My business is stanching blood and feeding fainting men; my post the open field between the bullet and the hospital. I sometimes discuss the application of a compress or a wisp of hay under a broken limb, but not the bearing and merits of a political movement. I make gruel — not speeches; I write *letters home* for wounded soldiers, not political addresses — and again I ask you

to pardon, not so much *what* I have said, as the fact of my having said anything in relation to a subject of which, upon the very nature of things, I am supposed to be profoundly ignorant.

With thanks for favors, and hoping to hear from you and yours as usual,

I remain as ever

Yours truly

CLARA BARTON

I am glad to hear from your wife and mother, and I am most thankful for your cordial invitation to visit you, which I shall (if I have not forfeited your friendship by my plainness of speech, which *I pray* I may not) accept most joyously, and I am even now rejoicing in prospect over my anticipated visit. We are not suffering from heat yet, and I am enjoying such horseback rides as seldom fall to the lot of ladies, I believe. I don't know but I should *dare ride with a cavalry rider* by and by, if I continue to practice. I could at least take lessons. I have a fine new English leaping saddle on the way to me. I hope *you will endeavor* to see to it that the rebel privateers shall not get hold of it. I could not sustain both the loss and disappointment, I fear.

Love to all.

Yours

C. B.

While Miss Barton was engaged in these less strenuous occupations she issued a requisition upon her brother in the Quartermaster's Department for a flatiron. She said: "My clothes are as well washed as at home, and I have a house to iron in if I had the iron. I could be as clean and as sleek as a kitten. Don't you want a smooth sister enough to send her a flatiron?"

In midsummer, hostilities began in earnest. On July 11 an assault on Fort Wagner was begun from

Morris Island, and was followed by a bombardment, Admiral Dahlgren firing shells from his gunboats, and General Gillmore opening with his land batteries. Then followed the charge of the black troops under Colonel R. G. Shaw, and the long siege in which the "swamp angel," a two-hundred-pounder Parrott, opened fire on Charleston. It was then that Clara Barton found what providential leading had brought her to this place. Not from a sheltered retreat, but under actual fire of the guns she ministered to the wounded and the dying. All day long under a hot sun she boiled water to wash their wounds, and by night she ministered to them, too ardent to remember her need of sleep. The hot winds drove the sand into her eyes, and weariness and danger were ever present. But she did her work unterrified. She saw Colonel Elwell leading the charge, and he believed that not only himself, but General Voris and Leggett would have died but for her ministrations.

Follow me, if you will, through these eight months [Miss Barton said shortly afterward]. I remember eight months of weary siege — scorched by the sun, chilled by the waves, rocked by the tempest, buried in the shifting sands, toiling day after day in the trenches, with the angry fire of five forts hissing through their ranks during every day of those weary months.

This was when your brave old regiments stood thundering at the gate of proud rebellious Charleston.... There, frowning defiance, with Moultrie on her left, Johnson on her right, and Wagner in front, she stood hurling fierce death and destruction full in the faces of the brave band who beleaguered her walls.

Sumter, the watch-dog, that stood before her door, lay maimed and bleeding at her feet, pierced with shot and torn with shell, the tidal waves lapping his wounds.



Still there was danger in his growl and death in his bite."<sup>1</sup>

One summer afternoon our brave little army was drawn up among the island sands and formed in line of march. For hours we watched. Dim twilight came, then the darkness for which they had waited, while the gloom and stillness of death settled down on the gathered forces of Morris Island. Then we pressed forward and watched again. A long line of phosphorescent light streamed and shot along the waves ever surging on our right.

I remember so well these islands, when the guns and the gunners, the muskets and musketeers, struggled for place and foothold among the shifting sands. I remember the first swarthy regiments with their unsoldierly tread, and the soldierly bearing and noble brows of the patient philanthropists who volunteered to lead them. I can see again the scarlet flow of blood as it rolled over the black limbs beneath my hands and the great heave of the heart before it grew still. And I remember Wagner and its six hundred dead, and the great-souled martyr that lay there with them when the charge was ended and the guns were cold.

Vividly she went on to describe the siege of Fort Wagner from Morris Island, thus:

I saw the bayonets glisten. The "swamp angel" threw her bursting bombs, the fleet thundered its cannonade, and the dark line of blue trailed its way in the dark line of belching walls of Wagner. I saw them on, up, and over the parapets into the jaws of death, and heard the clang of the death-dealing sabers as they grappled with the foe. I saw the ambulances laden down with agony, and the wounded, slowly crawling to me down the tide-washed beach, Voris and Cumminger gasping in their

<sup>1</sup> Fort Sumter, fiercely bombarded July 24, repulsed an assault against it on September 8, and was not completely silenced until October 26.

blood. And I heard the deafening clatter of the hoofs of "Old Sam" as Elwell madly galloped up under the walls of the fort for orders. I heard the tender, wailing fife, the muffled drum and the last shots as the pitiful little graves grew thick in the shifting sands.

Of this experience General Elwell afterward wrote:

I was shot with an Enfield cartridge within one hundred and fifty yards of the fort and so disabled that I could not go forward. I was in an awful predicament, perfectly exposed to canister from Wagner and shell from Gregg and Sumter in front, and the enfilade from James Island. I tried to dig a trench in the sand with my saber, into which I might crawl, but the dry sand would fall back in place about as fast as I could scrape it out with my narrow implement. Failing in this, on all fours I crawled toward the lee of the beach, which was but a few yards off. . . . A charge of canister all around me aroused my reverie to thoughts of action. I abandoned the idea of taking the fort and ordered a retreat of myself, which I undertook to execute in a most unmartial manner on my hands and knees spread out like a turtle.

After working my way for a half-hour and making perhaps two hundred yards, two boys of the 62d Ohio found me and carried me to our first parallel, where had been arranged an extempore hospital. After resting awhile I was put on the horse of my lieutenant-colonel, from which he had been shot that night, and started for the lower end of the island one and a half miles off, where better hospital arrangements had been prepared. Oh, what an awful ride that was! But I got there at last, by midnight. I had been on duty for forty-two hours without sleep under the most trying circumstances and my soul longed for sleep, which I got in this wise: an army blanket was doubled and laid on the soft side of a plank with an overcoat for a pillow, on which I laid my worn-out body.

And such a sleep! I dreamed that I heard the shouts of my boys in victory, that the rebellion was broken, that the Union was saved, and that I was at my old home and that my dear wife was trying to soothe my pain. . . .

My sleepy emotions awoke me and a dear, blessed woman was bathing my temples and fanning my fevered face. Clara Barton was there, an angel of mercy doing all in mortal power to assuage the miseries of the unfortunate soldiers.

While she was still under fire, but after the stress of the first assault, she found time to send a little note which enables us to identify with certainty her headquarters. Her work was not done in the shelter of any of the base hospitals in the general region of Charleston, it was with the advance hospital and under fire.

The midsummer campaign left Clara Barton desperately sick. She came very near to laying down her life with the brave men for whose sake she had freely risked it. What with her own sickness and the strenuous nature of her service, there is only a single line in her diary (on Thanksgiving Day) between July 23 and December 1. On July 22 she personally assisted at two terrible surgical operations as the men were brought directly in from the field. The soldiers were so badly wounded she wanted to see them die before the surgeon touched them. But the surgeons did their work well, and, though it was raining and cold, she covered them with rubber blankets and was astonished to find how comfortable they came to be. She returned to see them in the evening and they were both sleeping soundly. On the following day, the day of her last entry for the summer, she reported the wounded under her care as doing well; also, that she had now a man detailed to assume

some of the responsibility for the food of the wounded. Fresh green corn was available, and she was having hominy cooked for men who had had quite too much of salt pork. She was arranging the meals, but had other people to serve them.

Then Clara Barton dropped; her strength gave out. Overcome with fatigue and sick with fever, she lay for several weeks and wrote neither letters nor in her journal.

By October she was ready to answer Annie Childs's thoughtful inquiry about her wardrobe. There were two successive letters two weeks apart that consisted almost wholly of the answers she made to the question where-withal she should be clothed. Lest we should suppose Clara Barton to be an institution and not a wholly feminine woman, it is interesting to notice her concern that these dresses be of proper material and suitably made.

The dresses arrived with rather surprising promptness, and they fitted with only minor alterations which she described in detail to Annie. Toward the end of October she had occasion to write again to Annie thanking the friends who had remembered her so kindly, and expressing in her letter the feeling, which she so often recorded in her diary, that she was not doing as much as she ought to merit the kindness of her friends. In another letter a few days later, she told of one use she was making of her riding-skirt; she was furnishing a hospital at Fort Mitchell, seven miles away, and her ride to that hospital combined both business and pleasure.

About this time she gathered some trophies and sent to Worcester for the fair. They were exhibited and sold to add to the resources of the good people who were



providing in various ways for the comfort of the soldiers. At this time she wrote to other organizations who had sent her supplies, telling of the good they had done.

But again she fell upon a time of relative inactivity. There were no more battles to be fought immediately. She again wondered if she had any right to stay in a place where everything was so comfortable, especially as Annie Childs had written to her that the Worcester and Oxford women would not permit her to bear any part of the expense for the new clothes that had been made for her.

About this time her brother David received a letter from Stephen which showed that it was useless for her to stay where she was with any present expectation of securing his relief. He was still remaining with his property unmolested by both sides, and thought it better to continue there than run what seemed to him the larger risks of leaving.

One of the most interesting and in its way pathetic entries in her diary at this season, is a long one on December 5, 1863. Miss Barton had collided with official arrogance, and had unhappy memories of it. She probably would have said nothing about it had she not been appealed to by one of the women at the headquarters to do something to improve conditions at the regular hospital. And that was something which Clara Barton simply could not do. She knew better than almost any one else how much those hospitals lacked of perfection. She herself did not visit them, excepting as she went there to return official calls. She had made it plain to those in charge that she had not come to interfere with any form of established work, but to do a work of her own in com-

plete sympathy and coöperation with theirs. She knew that Dorothea Dix had undertaken an impossible task. She saw some nurses near to where she was who were much more fond of spending pleasant evenings at headquarters than they were of doing the work for which they were supposed to have come down. But she also knew that even such work as she was doing was looked upon by some of them with feelings of jealousy, as work outside of the general organization, yet receiving from the public a confidence and recognition not always accorded their own. One night, after one of the officer's wives had poured out her soul to Clara Barton, she poured out her soul to her diary. It is a very long entry, but it treats of some highly important subjects:

I moved along to the farther end of the piazza and found Mrs. D., who soon made known to me the subject of her desires. As I suspected, the matter was hospitals. She has been visiting the hospital at this place and has become not only interested, but excited upon the subject; the clothing department she finds satisfactory, but the storeroom appears empty and a sameness prevailing through food as provided which seems to her appalling for a diet for sick men. She states that they have no delicacies such as the country at the North are flooding hospitals with; that the food is all badly cooked, served cold, and always the same thing — dip toast, meat cooked dry, and tea without milk, perhaps once a week a potato for each man, or a baked apple. She proposed to establish a kitchen department for the serving of proper food to these men, irrespective of the pleasure of the "Powers that Be." She expects opposition from the surgeons in charge and Mrs. Russell, the matron appointed and stationed by Miss Dix, but thinks to commence by little and work herself in in spite of opposition,

or make report direct to Washington through Judge Holt, and other influential friends and obtain a *carte blanche* from Secretary Stanton to act independently of all parties. She wished to know if I thought it would be possible to procure supplies sufficient to carry on such a plan, and people to cook and serve if it were once established and directed properly. She had just mailed a letter to Miss Dame calling upon her to stir people at the North and make a move if possible in the right direction. She said General Gillmore took tea with her the evening previous and inquired with much feeling, "*How are my poor boys?*" She desired me to attend church at the hospital to-morrow (Sunday) morning; not with her, but go, pass through, and judge for myself. In the meantime the Major came in and the subject was discussed generally. I listened attentively, gave it as my opinion that there would be no difficulty in obtaining supplies and means of paying for the *preparation* of them, but of the manner and feasibility of delivering and distributing them among the patients I said nothing. *I had nothing to say.* I partly promised to attend church the next morning, and retired having said very little. What I have *thought* is quite another thing. I have no doubt but the patients lack many luxuries which the country at large endeavors to supply them with, and supposes they have, no doubt; but men suffer and die for the lack of the nursing and provisions of the loved ones at home. No doubt but the stately, stupendous, and magnificent indolence of the "officers in charge" embitters the days of the poor sufferers who have become mere machines in the hands of the Government to be ruled and oppressed by puffed-up, conceited, and self-sufficient superiors in position. No doubt but a good, well-regulated kitchen, presided over with a little good common sense and womanly care, would change the whole aspect of things and lengthen the days of some, and brighten the last days of others of the poor sufferers within the thin walls

of this hospital. I wish it might be, but what can *I* do? First it is not *my* province; I should be out of place there; next, Miss Dix is supreme, and her appointed nurse is matron; next, the surgeons will not brook any interference, and will, in my opinion, resent and resist the smallest effort to break over their own arrangements. What *others* may be able to do I am unable to conjecture, but I feel that *my* guns are effectually silenced. My sympathy is not destroyed, by any means, but my *confidence* in my ability to accomplish anything of an alleviating character in *this* department is completely annihilated. I *went* with all I had, to work where I thought I saw greatest need. A man can *have* no greater need than to be saved from death, and after six weeks of unremitting toil I was driven from my own tents by the selfish *cupidity* or *stupidity* of a pompous staff surgeon with a little accidental temporary authority, and I by the means thrown upon a couch of sickness, from which I barely escaped with my life. After four weeks of suffering most intense, I rose in my weakness and repaired again to my post, and scarcely were my labors recommenced when, through the *same* influence or *no* influence brought to bear upon the General Commanding, I was made the subject of a general order, and commanded to leave the island, giving me three hours in which to pack, remove, and ship four tons of supplies with no assistance that *they* knew of but one old female negro cook. I complied, but was remanded to *Beaufort* to labor in the hospitals there. With this portion of the "order" I failed to comply, and went home to Hilton Head and wrote the Commanding General a full explanation of my position, intention, proposed labors, etc., etc., which brought a rather sharp response, calling my humanity to account for not being willing to comply with his specified request, viz. to labor in Beaufort hospitals; insisting upon the plan as gravely as if it had been a possibility to be accomplished. But for the extreme ludicrousness of the



thing I should have felt hurt at the bare thought of such a charge against *me* and from such a quarter. The hospitals were supplied by the Sanitary Commission, Miss Dix holding supremacy over all female attendants by authority from Washington, Mrs. Lander *claiming*, and endeavoring to enforce the same, and scandalizing through the Press — each hospital labeled, *No Admittance*, and its surgeons bristling like porcupines at the bare sight of a proposed visitor. How in reason's name was I "to labor there"? Should I prepare my food and thrust it against the outer walls, in the hope it might strengthen the patients inside? Should I tie up my bundle of clothing and creep up and deposit it on the doorstep and slink away like a guilty mother, and watch afar off to see if the master of the mansion would accept or reject the "foundling"? If the Commanding General in his wisdom, when he assumed the direction of my affairs, and commanded me *where* to labor, had opened the doors for me to enter, the idea would have *seemed* more practical. It did not occur to me at the moment how I was to effect an entrance to these hospitals, but I have since thought that I might have been *expected* to watch my opportunity some *dark night*, and *STORM* them, although it must be confessed that the popularity of this mode of attack was rather on the decline in this department at that time, having reached its height very soon after the middle of July.

One other uncomfortable experience Clara Barton had at this time. When she first began her work for the relief of the soldiers, she went forth from Washington as a center and still kept up her work in the Patent Office. When she found that this work was to take all her time, she approached the Commissioner of Patents and asked to have her place kept for her, but without salary. He refused this proposal, and said her salary should continue

to be paid. The other clerks, also, were in hearty accord with this proposal, and offered to distribute her work among them. But as the months went by, this grew to be a somewhat laborious undertaking. The number of women clerks in the Patent Office had increased as so many of the men were in the army. There were twenty of these women clerks, some of whom had never known Clara Barton, and they did not see any reason why she should be drawing a salary and winning fame for work which they were expected to do. Moreover, the report became current that she was drawing a large salary for her war work in addition. The women in the Patent Office drew up a "round robin" demanding that her salary cease. This news, with the report that the Commissioner had acted upon the request, came to her while she had other things to trouble her. Had the salary ceased because she was no longer doing the work, it would have been no more than she had herself proposed. But when her associates, having volunteered to do the work for her that her place might be kept and her support continued, became the agents for the dissemination of a false report, she was hurt and indignant.

To the honor of Judge Holloway and his associates in the Patent Office, be it recorded that she received a letter from Judge Holloway that she had been misinformed about the termination of her salary; there had, indeed, been such a rumor and request, but he would not have acted on it without learning the truth, and did not credit it. Her desk would await her return if he continued as Commissioner.

A few days before Christmas another pleasant event occurred. Her nephew Stephen, whom she had con-

tinued to call "Bub," arrived in uniform. Though hardly fifteen, he had enlisted in the telegraph corps, and was sent to be with her. He became her closest friend in an intimacy of relation that did not cease until her eyes closed in death; and then, in her perfect confidence in him, she appointed him her executor.

A letter in this month reviews the experiences of her sojourn at Hilton Head:

HILTON HEAD, S.C.

Wednesday, December 9th, 1863

MR. PARKER,

MY DEAR KIND FRIEND:

It would be impossible for me to tell how many times I have commenced to write you. Sometimes I have put my letter by because we were doing so little there was nothing of interest to communicate; at other times, because there was so much I had not time to tell it, until some greater necessity drew me away, and my half-written letter became "rubbish" and was destroyed. And now I have but one topic which is of decided interest to *me*, and that is so peculiarly so that I will hasten to speak of it at once. After *almost* a year's absence, I am beginning to *think* about once more coming *home*, once more meeting the scores of kind friends I have been from so long; and the nearer I bring this object to my view, the brighter it appears. The nearer I fancy the meeting, the dearer the faces and the kinder the smiles appear to me and the sweeter the welcome voices that fall upon my ear. Not that I have not found good friends here. None could have been kinder. I came with one brother, loving, kind, and considerate; I have met others here scarcely less so, and those, too, with whom rested the power to make me comfortable and happy, and I have yet to recall the first instance in which they have failed to use their utmost endeavor to render me so, and while a tear of joy glistens in my eye at the thought of the kind

friends I hope so soon to meet, there will still linger one of regret for the many of those I leave.

Eight months and two days ago we landed at the dock in this harbor. When nations move as rapidly as ours moves at present, that is a long time, and in it as a nation we have done much, gained much, and suffered much. Still much more remains to be done, much more acquired, and I fear much more suffered. Our brave and noble old Army of Virginia still marches and fights and the glorious armies of the West still fight and conquer; our soldiers still die upon the battle-field, pine in hospitals, and languish in prison; the wives and sisters and mothers still wait, and weep and hope and toil and pray, and the little child, fretting at the long-drawn days, asks in tearful impatience, "*When will my papa come?*"

The first sound which fell upon my ear in this Department was the thunder of our guns in Charleston Harbor, and still the proud city sits like a queen and dictates terms to our army and navy. Sumter, the watch-dog that lay before her door, fell, maimed and bleeding, it is true; still there is defiance in his growl, and death in his bite, and pierced and prostrate as he lies with the tidal waves lapping his wounds, it were worth *our* lives, and more than *his*, to go and take him.

We have captured one fort — Gregg — and one charnel house — Wagner — and we have built one cemetery, Morris Island. The thousand little sand-hills that glitter in the pale moonlight are a thousand headstones, and the restless ocean waves that roll and break upon the whitened beach sing an eternal requiem to the toil-worn, gallant dead who sleep beside.

As the year drew to a close, the conviction grew stronger that her work in this field was done. Charleston still resisted attempts to recapture it. Sumter, though demolished, was in the hands of the Confederates. There was no prospect of immediate battle, and unless



there was fresh bloodshed there was no imperative call for her. Moreover, little jealousies and petty factions grew up around the hospitals and headquarters, where there were few women and many men, and there were rumors of mismanagement which she must hear, but not reply to. She had many happy experiences to remember, and she left a record of much good done. But her work was finished at that place. In her last entries in her diary she is disposing of her remaining stores, packing her trunk, and when, after a rather long interval, we hear from her again, she is in Washington.

## CHAPTER XVII

FROM THE WILDERNESS TO THE JAMES

IN THE YEAR 1864

CLARA BARTON returned from Port Royal and Hilton Head sometime in January, 1864. On January 28 she was in Worcester, whence she addressed a letter to Colonel Clark in regard to the forthcoming reunion of veterans in Worcester. She did not expect to be present, as her stay in Massachusetts was to be brief.

On Sunday, February 14, she was in Brooklyn, and, as usual, went to hear Henry Ward Beecher. He preached on "Unwritten Heroism," and related some heroic incidents in the life of an Irish servant girl who, all unknown to fame, was still a heroine. Clara meditated on the sermon and regretted that she herself was not more heroic.

Before many days she was in Washington. It was rainy and cold. She found very little that was inspiring. Her room was cheerless, though she does not say so, but the little touches which she gave to it, as recorded, show how bare and comfortless it must have been. Her salary at the Patent Office continued, but it now becomes apparent that the arrangement whereby the other women in the Patent Office were to do her work had not continued indefinitely. She was hiring a partially disabled man to do her writing and was dividing her salary with him. Out of the balance she paid the rent of her room, eighty-four dollars a year, payable a year in advance. It was not exorbitant rent considering the demand for

space in Washington. But it was a cheerless place, and she did not occupy it much. Principally, it was a storehouse for her supplies, with a place partitioned off for her own bedroom. She had many callers, however, Senator Wilson coming to see her frequently, and aiding her in every possible way. More than once she gave him information which he, as chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs of the United States Senate, utilized with far-reaching results. Sometimes she told him in the most uncompromising manner of what she regarded as abuses which she had witnessed. There were times when men seemed to her very cowardly, and the Government machinery very clumsy and ineffective. On the evening of April 13, 1864, she was fairly well disgusted with all mankind. She thus wrote her opinion of the human race, referring particularly to the masculine part of it:

I am thinking very busily about the result of the investigation into the Florida matter. Is General Seymour to be sacrificed when so many hundred people and the *men* know it to be all based on falsehood and wrong? Is there no manly justice in the world? Is there not one among them all that *dares* risk the little of military station he may possess to come out and speak the truth, and do the right? Oh, pity! O Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him!

The next day was not a cheerful day for her. She was still brooding on some of these same matters. She tried in those days to escape from these unhappy reflections by going where she would be compelled to think of something else. But not even in church could she always keep her mind off of them. She wrote at length in her diary on the morning of the 14th, and that evening, when

Senator Wilson called, she told him what she thought of the United States Army, the United States Senate, and of people and things in general:

*Thursday, April 14th, 1864.* This was one of the most down-spirited days that ever came to me. All the world appeared selfish and treacherous. I can get no hold on a good noble sentiment *anywhere*. I have scanned over and over the whole moral horizon and it is all dark, the night clouds seem to have shut down, so stagnant, so dead, so selfish, so calculating. Is there no right? Are there no consequences attending wrong? How shall the world move on in all this weight of dead, morbid meanness? Shall lies prevail forevermore? Look at the state of things, both civil and military, that curse our Government. The pompous air with which little dishonest pimps lord it over their betters. Contractors ruining the Nation, and oppressing the poor, and no one rebukes them. See a monkey-faced official, not twenty rods from me, oppressing and degrading poor women who come up to his stall to feed their children, that he may steal with better grace and show to the Government how much his economy saves it each month. Poor blind Government never feels inside his pockets, pouching with ill-gotten gain, heavy with sin. His whole department know it, but it might not be quite *wise* for them to speak — they will tell it freely enough, but will not, dare not affirm it — COWARDS! Congress knows it, but no one can see that it will make votes for him at home by meddling with it, so it is winked at. The Cabinet know it, but people that live in glass houses must not throw stones. So it rests, and the women live lighter and *sink lower*, God help them. And next an ambitious, dishonest General lays a political plot to be executed with human life. He is to create a Senator, some memberships, a Governor, commissions, and all the various offices of a state, and the grateful recipients are to repay



the favor by gaining for him his confirmation as Major-General. So the poor rank and file are marched out to do the job, a leader is selected known to be *brave* to rashness if need be, and given the command in the dark, that he may never be able to claim any portion of the glory — so that he cannot say *I* did it. Doomed, and he knows it, he is sent on, remonstrates, comes back and explains, is left alone with the responsibility on his shoulders, forces divided, animals starving, men suffering, enemy massing in front, and still there he is. Suddenly he is attacked, defeated as he expected he must be, and the world is shocked by the tales of his rashness and procedure contrary to orders. He cannot speak; he is a subordinate officer and must remain silent; the thousands with him know it, but *they* must not speak; Congress does *not* know it, and refuses to be informed; and the doomed one is condemned and the guilty one asks for his reward, and the admiring world claims it for him. He has had a battle and *only lost* two thousand men and gained nothing. Surely, this deserved something. And still the world moves on. No wonder it looks dark, though, to those who do not wear the tinsel. And so my day has been weary with these thoughts, and my heart heavy and I cannot raise it — I doubt the justice of *almost* all I see.

Evening. At eight Mr. Wilson called. I asked him if the investigation was closed. He replied yes, and that General Seymour would leave the Department in disgrace. This was too much for my fretted soul, and I poured out the vials of my indignation in no stinted measure. I told him the facts, and what I thought of a Committee that was too imbecile to listen to the truth when it was presented to them; that they had made themselves a laughing-stock for even the privates in the service by their stupendous inactivity and gullibility; that they were all a set of dupes, not to say knaves, for I knew Gray of New York had been on using all his blar-

ney with them that was possible to wipe over them. When I had freed my mind, and it was some time, he looked amazed and called for a written statement. I promised it. He left. I was anxious to possess myself of the most reliable facts in existence and decide to go to New York and see Colonel Hall and Dr. Marsh again; make my toilet ready, write some letters, and at three o'clock retired.

From all of this it will appear that Clara Barton had a rather gloomy time of it after her return to Washington. Old friends called on her and she was amid pleasant surroundings, but she was ill at ease. The Army of the Potomac had failed to hold its old position north of the Rappahannock. She anticipated the same old round which she had witnessed, marching and counter-marching with ineffective fighting, great suffering, and no permanent results. Nor did she see how she was henceforth to be of much assistance. The Sanitary and Christian Commissions were doing increasingly effective work in the gathering and distribution of supplies. The hospitals were approaching what ought to have been a state of efficiency. There seemed little place for her. She went to the War Department to obtain blanket passes, permitting herself and friend to go wherever she might deem it wise to go, and to have transportation for their supplies. She could hardly ask for anything less if she were to ask for anything, but it was a larger request than Secretary Stanton was at that time ready to grant. Her attempts to secure what she deemed necessary through the Medical Department were unavailing. The Medical Department thought itself competent to manage its own affairs. But she knew that there was desperate need of the kind of service which she could render.

For a time she questioned seriously whether she should not give up the whole attempt to return to the front. She even considered the possibility of asking for her old desk at the Patent Office, and letting the doctors and nurses take care of the wounded in the way they thought best.

The national conventions were approaching. A woman in Ohio who had worked with her on the battle-field wrote asking Miss Barton for whom she intended to vote. She replied at considerable length. She intended to vote for the Republican candidate whoever he might be, because in so doing she would vote for the Union. She would not vote for McClellan nor for any other candidate nominated by his party. For three years she had been voting for Abraham Lincoln. She thought she still would vote for him; she trusted him and believed in him. But still if the Republicans should nominate Frémont, she would not withhold her approval. There was in Washington and in the army so much incompetence, so much rascality, it was possible that another President — especially one with military experience — would push the war to a speedier finish, and rout out some of the rascality she saw in Washington. She thought that Frémont might possibly have some advantage over Lincoln in this respect. But she rather hoped Lincoln would be renominated. He was so worthy, so honest, so kind, and the people could trust him. Though the abuses which had grown up under his administration were great, they were mostly inevitable. And so she rather thought she would vote for Lincoln, even in preference to the very popular hero, Frémont. Frémont had, indeed, seen, sooner than Lincoln, the

necessity of abolition, and she thought would have a stronger grip on military affairs. But her heart was with Lincoln.

While she was waiting for a new call to service and was busy every day with a multitude of cares, she heard a lecture by the Reverend George Thompson, which is of interest because it enables us to discover how she now had come to feel about "Old John Brown." It will be remembered that she had not wholly approved the John Brown raid, nor shared in the public demonstrations that followed his execution. She had come, however, to a very different feeling with regard to him. On April 6, 1864, George Thompson, the abolitionist, gave an address in Washington. The address was delivered in the hall of the House of Representatives, and the President and Cabinet were among those who attended. Clara Barton was present, and close beside her in the gallery sat John Brown's brother.

For a few days previous she had been reading "No Name," by Wilkie Collins. She compared his style to that of Dickens with some discriminating comments on the literary work of each. But she discontinued "No Name" when near the end of it, in order to read in preparation for the lecture by George Thompson. It will be well to quote her entry in her diary for the 5th and 6th of April:

*Washington, April 5th, 1864, Tuesday.* Rained all day just as if it had not rained every other day for almost two weeks, and I read as steadily indoors as it rained out; am nearly through with "No Name." Until 4 o'clock P.M. I had no disturbance, and then a most pleasant one. Mr. Brown came in to bring me letters



from Mary Norton and Julia, and next to ask me to mend a little clothing, and next to present me a beautiful scrap-book designed for *my own* articles. It is a very beautiful article and I prize it much. Then my friend, Mr. Parker, called for a chat, and I read to him some two hours, in order to prepare his mind for George Thompson's lecture which is to occur to-morrow night. Then a call from Senator W., and next Dr. Elliott which lasted till just now, and it is almost eleven o'clock, and I have set my fire out and apparently passed the day to little purpose; still, I think it has glided away very innocently, and with a few minutes' preparation I shall retire with a grateful heart for the even, pleasant days which run so smoothly in my course.

*Washington, April 6th, 1864, Wednesday.* There are signs of clear weather, although it is by no means an established fact yet. I laid my reading aside, and took up my pen to address a letter to Mr. Wilson. I wrote at greater length than I had expected and occupied quite a portion of the day. The subject woke up the recollection of a train of ills and wrongs submitted to and borne so long that I suffered intensely in the reproduction of them, but I did reproduce, whether to any purpose or not time will reveal. It is not to be supposed that any decided revolution is to follow, as this is never to be looked for in my case. I have done expecting it, and done, I trust, with my efforts in behalf of others. I must take the little remnant of life that may remain to me as my own special property, and appropriate it accordingly. I had asked an appointment, as before referred to. I find I cannot make the use of it I had desired, and I have asked to recall the application. I have said I could not afford to make it. This was the day preceding the night of Mr. George Thompson's lecture in the Hall of Representatives. I went early with Mr. Brown. We went into the gallery and took a front seat in a side gallery. The House commenced to fill very rapidly with one of

the finest-looking audiences that could be gathered in Washington. Conspicuous among them were Mr. Chase, Governor Sprague, Senator Wilson, Governor Boutwell and lady, Speaker Colfax, Thad. Stevens, and, to cap all, the brother of "Old John Brown" came and sat with us. At eight the orator of the evening entered the Hall in the same group with President Lincoln, Vice-President Hamlin, Rev. Mr. Pierpont, and others whom I did not recognize. Preliminary remarks were made by Mr. Pierpont. Next followed Mr. Hamlin, who introduced Mr. Thompson, who arose under so severe emotions that he could scarce utter a word. It seemed for a time that he would fall before the audience he had come to address. The contrast was evidently too great to be contemplated with composure; his sensitive mind reverted doubtless to his previous visits to this country, when he had seen himself hung and burnt in effigy, been mobbed, stoned, and assailed with "filthy missiles," and now he stood, almost deafened with applause, in the Hall of Representatives of America, America "free" from the shackles of slavery, and to address the President, and great political heads of the Nation. No wonder he was overcome, no wonder that the air felt thick, and his words came feebly, and his body bent beneath the weight of the contrast, the glorious consummation of all he had so earnestly labored and so devoutly prayed for. But by degrees his strength returned, and the rich melody of his voice filled every inch of the vast hall, and delighted every loyal, truth-loving ear. It would be useless for me to attempt a description of his address — it is so far immortal as to be always found, I trust, among the records of the glorious doings and sayings of our country's supporters. His endorsement of the President was one of the most touching and sublime things I have ever heard uttered, and the messages from England to him breathed a spirit of friendship which I was not prepared to listen to. Surely we are not to growl at and complain of England as

jealous and hostile when her working-people, deprived of their daily labor and the support of their families through our difficulties, bid us Godspeed, and never to yield till our purpose has been accomplished, and congratulate us upon having achieved our independence in the War of the Revolution, and ask us now to go on and achieve a still greater independence, which shall embrace the whole civilized world. Surely these words show a nobler spirit in England than we had any reason or real right to expect. His remarks touching John Brown were strong, and, sitting as I was, watching the immediate effect upon the brother at my side, and when in a few minutes the band struck up the familiar air dedicated to him the world over, I truly felt that John Brown's Soul *was* marching on, and that the mouldering in the grave was of little account; the brother evidently felt the same. There was a glistening of the eye and a compression of the lip which spoke it all and more; he was evidently proud of the gallows rope that hung Old John Brown, "Old Hero Brown!"

On leaving the Hall, Mr. Parker joined us, and we all took a cream at Simmod's and returned, and I made good my escape to my room.

Since her return from Hilton Head, she had been furnished no passes. Official Washington had forgotten her in her year of absence. But there came a day when Clara Barton had no difficulty in obtaining passes, and when all Washington was willing enough to have her go to the front. That was when the battle of Spotsylvania occurred, May 8, 1864. It took Washington a day or two to realize the gravity of the situation; and Clara Barton was begging and imploring the opportunity to hasten at the sound of the first gun. There was refusal and delay; then, when it was realized that more than 2700 men had been killed and more than 13,000 wounded,

her passes came. General Rucker, who had been endeavoring to secure them for her, obtained them, and sent them in haste by special messenger; and Clara Barton was back on the boat, landing, as so often before, at Acquia Creek, and wading through the red mud to where the wounded were.

They were everywhere; and most of all they were in wagons sunk to the hub in mud, and stalled where they could not get out, while men groaned and died and maggots crawled in their wounds. Bitterly she lamented the lost hours while she had been clamoring for passes; but now she set herself to work with such facilities as she could command, first for the relief of the wounded men in wagons:

The terrible slaughter of the Wilderness and Spotsylvania turned all pitying hearts and helping hands once more to Fredericksburg [she wrote afterward]. And no one who reached it by way of Belle Plain, while this latter constituted the base of supplies for General Grant's army, can have forgotten the peculiar geographical location, and the consequent fearful condition of the country immediately about the landing, which consisted of a narrow ridge of high land on the left bank of the river. Along the right extended the river itself. On the left, the hills towered up almost to a mountain height. The same ridge of high land was in front at a quarter of a mile distant, through which a narrow defile formed the road leading out, and on to Fredericksburg, ten miles away, thus leaving a level space or basin of an area of a fourth of a mile, directly in front of the landing.

Across this small plain all transportation to and from the army must necessarily pass. The soil was red clay. The ten thousand wheels and hoofs had ground it to a powder, and a sudden rain upon the surrounding hills



had converted the entire basin into one vast mortar-bed, smooth and glassy as a lake, and much the color of light brick dust.

The poor, mutilated, starving sufferers of the Wilderness were pouring into Fredericksburg by thousands — all to be taken away in army wagons across ten miles of alternate hills, and hollows, stumps, roots, and mud!

The boats from Washington to Belle Plain were loaded down with fresh troops, while the wagons from Fredericksburg to Belle Plain were loaded with wounded men and went back with supplies. The exchange was transacted on this narrow ridge, called the landing.

I arrived from Washington with such supplies as I could take. It was still raining. Some members of the Christian Commission had reached an earlier boat, and, being unable to obtain transportation to Fredericksburg, had erected a tent or two on the ridge and were evidently considering what to do next.

To nearly or quite all of them the experience and scene were entirely new. Most of them were clergymen, who had left at a day's notice, by request of the distracted fathers and mothers who could not go to the relief of the dear ones stricken down by thousands, and thus begged those in whom they had the most confidence to go for them. They went willingly, but it was no easy task they had undertaken. It was hard enough for old workers who commenced early and were inured to the life and its work.

I shall never forget the scene which met my eye as I stepped from the boat to the top of the ridge. Standing in this plain of mortar-mud were at least two hundred six-mule army wagons, crowded full of wounded men waiting to be taken upon the boats for Washington. They had driven from Fredericksburg that morning. Each driver had gotten his wagon as far as he could, for those in front of and about him had stopped.

Of the depth of the mud, the best judgment was

formed from the fact that no entire hub of a wheel was in sight, and you saw nothing of any animal below its knees and the mass of mud all settled into place perfectly smooth and glassy.

As I contemplated the scene, a young, intelligent, delicate gentleman, evidently a clergyman, approached me, and said anxiously, but almost timidly: "Madam, do you think those wagons are filled with wounded men?"

I replied that they undoubtedly were, and waiting to be placed on the boats then unloading.

"How long must they wait?" he asked.

I said that, judging from the capacity of the boats, I thought they could not be ready to leave much before night.

"What can we do for them?" he asked, still more anxiously.

"They are hungry and must be fed," I replied.

For a moment his countenance brightened, then fell again as he exclaimed: "What a pity; we have a great deal of clothing and reading matter, but no food in any quantity, excepting crackers."

I told him that I had coffee and that between us I thought we could arrange to give them all hot coffee and crackers.

"But where shall we make our coffee?" he inquired, gazing wistfully about the bare wet hillside.

I pointed to a little hollow beside a stump. "There is a good place for a fire," I explained, "and any of this loose brush will do."

"Just here?" he asked.

"Just here, sir."

He gathered the brush manfully and very soon we had some fire and a great deal of smoke, two crotched sticks and a crane, if you please, and presently a dozen camp-kettles of steaming hot coffee. My helper's pale face grew almost as bright as the flames and the smutty brands looked blacker than ever in his slim white fingers.

Suddenly a new difficulty met him. "Our crackers are in barrels, and we have neither basket nor box. How can we carry them?"

I suggested that aprons would be better than either, and, getting something as near the size and shape of a common tablecloth as I could find, tied one about him and one about me, fastened all four of the corners to the waist, and pinned the sides, thus leaving one hand for a kettle of coffee and one free, to administer it.

Thus equipped we moved down the slope. Twenty steps brought us to the abrupt edge which joined the mud, much as the bank of a canal does the black line of water beside it.

But here came the crowning obstacle of all. So completely had the man been engrossed in his work, so delighted as one difficulty after another vanished and success became more and more apparent, that he entirely lost sight of the distance and difficulties between himself and the objects to be served.

If you could have seen the expression of consternation and dismay depicted in every feature of his fine face, as he imploringly exclaimed, "How are we to get to them?"

"There is no way but to walk," I answered.

He gave me one more look as much as to say, "Are you going to step in there?" I allowed no time for the question, but, in spite of all the solemnity of the occasion, and the terribleness of the scene before me, I found myself striving hard to keep the muscles of my face all straight. As it was, the corners of my mouth would draw into wickedness, as with a backward glance I saw the good man tighten his grasp upon his apron and take his first step into military life.

But thank God, it was not his last.

I believe it is recorded in heaven — the faithful work performed by that Christian Commission minister through long weary months of rain and dust and summer

suns and winter snows. The sick soldier blessed and the dying prayed for him, as through many a dreadful day he stood fearless and firm among fire and smoke (not made of brush), and walked calmly and unquestioningly through something redder and thicker than the mud of Belle Plain.

No one has forgotten the heart-sickness which spread over the entire country as the busy wires flashed the dire tidings of the terrible destitution and suffering of the wounded of the Wilderness whom I attended as they lay in Fredericksburg. But you may never have known how many hundredfold of these ills were augmented by the conduct of improper, heartless, unfaithful officers in the immediate command of the city and upon whose actions and indecisions depended entirely the care, food, shelter, comfort, and lives of that whole city of wounded men. One of the highest officers there has since been convicted a traitor. And another, a little dapper captain quartered with the owners of one of the finest mansions in the town, boasted that he had changed his opinion since entering the city the day before; that it was in fact a pretty hard thing for refined people like the people of Fredericksburg to be compelled to open their homes and admit "these dirty, lousy, common soldiers," and that he was not going to compel it.

This I heard him say, and waited until I saw him make his words good, till I saw, crowded into one old sunken hotel, lying helpless upon its bare, wet, bloody floors, five hundred fainting men hold up their cold, bloodless, dingy hands, as I passed, and beg me in Heaven's name for a cracker to keep them from starving (and I had none); or to give them a cup that they might have something to drink water from, if they could get it (and I had no cup and could get none); till I saw two hundred six-mule army wagons in a line, ranged down the street to headquarters, and reaching so far out on the Wilderness road that I never found the end of it; every wagon



crowded with wounded men, stopped, standing in the rain and mud, wrenched back and forth by the restless, hungry animals all night from four o'clock in the afternoon till eight next morning and how much longer I know not. The dark spot in the mud under many a wagon, told only too plainly where some poor fellow's life had dripped out in those dreadful hours.

I remembered one man who would set it right, if he knew it, who possessed the power and who would believe me if I told him [says Miss Barton in describing this experience]. I commanded immediate conveyance back to Belle Plain. With difficulty I obtained it, and four stout horses with a light army wagon took me ten miles at an unbroken gallop, through field and swamp and stumps and mud to Belle Plain and a steam tug at once to Washington. Landing at dusk I sent for Henry Wilson, chairman of the Military Committee of the Senate. A messenger brought him at eight, saddened and appalled like every other patriot in that fearful hour, at the weight of woe under which the Nation staggered, groaned, and wept.

He listened to the story of suffering and faithlessness, and hurried from my presence, with lips compressed and face like ashes. At ten he stood in the War Department. They could not credit his report. He must have been deceived by some frightened villain. No official report of unusual suffering had reached them. Nothing had been called for by the military authorities commanding Fredericksburg.

Mr. Wilson assured them that the officers in trust there were not to be relied upon. They were faithless, overcome by the blandishments of the wily inhabitants. Still the Department doubted. It was then that he proved that my confidence in his firmness was not misplaced, as, facing his doubters he replies: "One of two things will have to be done — either you will send some one to-night with the power to investigate and correct the

abuses of our wounded men at Fredericksburg, or the Senate will send some one to-morrow."

This threat recalled their scattered senses.

At two o'clock in the morning the Quartermaster-General and staff galloped to the 6th Street wharf under orders; at ten they were in Fredericksburg. At noon the wounded men were fed from the food of the city and the houses were opened to the "*dirty, lousy* soldiers" of the Union Army.

Both railroad and canal were opened. In three days I returned with carloads of supplies.

No more jolting in army wagons! And every man who left Fredericksburg by boat or by car owes it to the firm decision of one man that his grating bones were not dragged ten miles across the country or left to bleach in the sands of that city.

Yes, they owed it all to Senator Wilson. And he owed it to Clara Barton.

Why was there such neglect, and why did no one else report it?

The surgeons on the front were busy, and they did not see it. The surgeons and nurses in the base hospitals were busy, and they knew nothing of it. Military commanders only knew that the roads were bad, and that it was difficult to move troops to the front or wounded men back to the rear, but supposed that the best was being made of a bad matter. But Clara Barton knew that, if some one in authority could realize that thousands of men were suffering needless agony and hundreds were dying who might be saved, something would be done.

Something was done; and many a soldier who lived and regained his health had reason, without knowing it, to bless the name of Clara Barton.

At the close of the Wilderness campaign, Clara Barton

found time to answer some letters and acknowledge some remittances. In one of these letters she answered the question why, being as she was in close touch and entire sympathy with the work of the Sanitary and Christian Commissions, she still continued to do her work independently. It is a thoroughly characteristic letter:

May 30, 1864

... The question would naturally arise with strangers, why I, feeling so in unison with the Commission and among whose members I number my best friends, should maintain a separated organization. To those who know me it is obvious. Long before either commission was in the field, or had even an existence, I was laboring by myself for the little I might be able to accomplish and, gathering such helpers about me as I was best able to do, toiled in the front of our armies wherever I could reach, and thus I have labored on up to the present time. Death has sometimes laid his hand upon the active forces of my co-workers and stilled the steps most useful to me, but others have risen up to supply the place, and now it does not seem wise or desirable, after all this time, to change my course. If I have by practice acquired any skill, it belongs to me to use untrammelled, and I might not work as efficiently, or labor as happily, under the direction of those of less experience than myself. It is simply just to all parties that I retain my present position, and through all up to the present time I have been always able to meet my own demands with such little supplies as came voluntarily from my circle of personal friends, which fortunately was not small. But the necessities of the present campaign were well-nigh overwhelming, and my duty required that I gather all I could, even if I shouted aloud to strangers for those who lay fainting and speechless by the wayside or moaning in this wilderness. I did so and such responses as yours

have been the reply. Dearly do I think God poured his blessing on my little work, for the friends He has raised up to aid me, for the uninterrupted health and unfailing strength He has given me, and more and more with each day's observation do I stand overawed by the great lessons He is teaching us His children, grand and stern as the earthquake's shock, judgments soft and terrible as the lightning stroke. He is leading us back to a sense of justice and duty and humanity, while our thousand guns flash freedom and our martyrs die. It is a terrible sacrifice which He requires at our hands and in obedience the Nation has builded its altar and uplifted its arm of faith and the knife gleams above the child. He who commands it alone knows when His angel shall call from heaven to stay our hands and bid us no longer slay our own. Then may we find hidden in the peaceful thicket the appropriate sacrifice that in blessing He may bless us, that our young men return together, that our seed shall possess the gates of our enemies, and that all the nations of the earth be blessed.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### TO THE END OF THE WAR

At the end of May, 1864, Clara Barton was in Washington. She wrote to her brother David informing him of her return to the city on the night of May 24. There had been, she told him, a series of terrible battles; she doubted if history had ever known men to be mowed down in regiments as in these battles. Victory had been won, but it was incomplete, and the cost had been terrible. She had seen nine thousand Confederate prisoners.

As to her future plans, she thought she would not go out from Washington a great deal during the excessively hot weather. She remembered her sickness of the previous summer, and did not wish to repeat it. But as for keeping her away in case there should be a battle, she would not count a kindness on anybody's part to attempt that. She said: "I suppose I should feel about as much benefited as my goldfish would if some kind-hearted person should take him out of his vase where he looked so wet and cold, and wrap him up in warm, dry flannel. We can't live out of our natural element, can we? I'll keep quiet when the war is over."

She was not permitted to stay in Washington and guard her health. She was appointed Superintendent of the Department of Nurses for the Army of the James. She was under the authority of Surgeon McCormack, Chief Medical Director. The army was commanded by General B. F. Butler. She entered this new field of service June 18, 1864. We have a letter which she wrote

concerning a celebration, such as it was, of the 4th of July.

POINT OF ROCKS, VA., July 5, 1864  
General Butler's Department

MY MOST ESTEEMED AND DEAR FRIEND:

Here in the sunshine and dust and toil and confusion of camp life, the mercury above a hundred, the atmosphere and everything about black with flies, the dust rolling away in clouds as far as the eye can penetrate, the ashy ground covered with scores of hospital tents shielding nearly all conceivable maladies that *soldier* "flesh" is heir to, and stretching on beyond the miles of bristling fortifications, entrenchments, and batteries encircling Petersburg, — all ready to *blaze*, — just here in the midst of all this your refreshing letter dropped in upon me.

NEW YORK! It seemed to me that in the very post-mark I could see pictured nice Venetian blinds, darkened rooms where never a fly dared enter, shady yards with cool fountains throwing their spray almost in at the open windows, watered streets flecked with the changing shadows of waving trees, bubbling soda fountains and water ices and grottoes and pony gallops in Central Park and cool drives at evening, and much more I have not time to enumerate, and for an instant I fear human selfishness triumphed, and, before I was aware, the mind had instinctively drawn a contrast, and the sun's rays glowed hotter and fiercer, and the dust rolled heavier, and my wayward heart complained to me that I was ever in the sun or dust or mud or frost, and impatiently asked if all the years of my life should pass and I never know again a season of quiet rest; and I confess it with shame. I trust that the suddenness with which it was rebuked may atone for its wickedness in some degree, and when I remembered the thousands who would so gladly come and share the toils with us, if only they could be free to do so, I gave thanks anew for my great privileges, and broke the seal of the welcome missive.

And you find hot weather even there, and have time among all the business of that driving city to remember the worn-out sufferers who are lying so helpless about us, many of whom have fought the last fight, kept the last watch, and, standing at the outer post, only wait to be relieved. The march has been toilsome, but the relief comes speedily at last — sometimes almost before we are aware. Yesterday in passing through a ward (if wards they might be termed) filled mostly from the U.S. Colored Regiments I stopped beside a sergeant who had appeared weak all day, but made no complaint, and asked how he was feeling then. Looking up in my face, he replied, "Thank you, Miss, a little better, I hope." "Can I do anything for you?" I asked. "A little water, if you please." I turned to get it, and that instant he gasped and was gone. Men frequently reach us at noon and have passed away before night. For such we can only grieve, for there is little opportunity to labor in their cases. I find a large number of colored people, mostly women and children, left in this vicinity, the stronger having been taken by their owners "up country." In all cases they are destitute, having stood the sack of two opposing armies — what one army left them, the other has taken.

On the plantation which forms the site of this hospital is a colored woman, the house servant of the former owner, with thirteen children, eight with her and five of her oldest taken away. The rebel troops had taken her bedding and clothing and ours had taken her money, forty dollars in gold, which she had saved, she said, and I do not doubt her statement in the least. I gave her all the food I had that was suitable for her and her children and shall try to find employment for her.

For the last few days we have been constantly meeting and caring for the wounded and broken-down from Wilson's cavalry raid; they have endured more than could be expected of men, and are still brave and cheerful under their sufferings.

I hope I shall not surprise you by the information that we celebrated the Fourth (yesterday) by giving an extra dinner. We invited in the lame, the halt, and the blind to the number of some two hundred or more to partake of roast beef, new potatoes, squash, blanchmange, cake, etc., etc. We had music, not by the band, but from the vicinity of Petersburg, and, if not so sweet and perfectly timed as that discoursed by some of your excellent city bands, it must be acknowledged as both startling and thrilling, and was received with repeated "*bursts*."

I thank you much for your kind solicitude for my health. I beg to assure you that I am perfectly well at present and, with the blessing of Heaven, I hope to remain so.

Of the length of the campaign I have no adequate idea, and can form none. I should be happy to write you pages of events as they transpire every day, but duty must not be neglected for mere gratification.

Thus far I have remained at the Corps (which is, in this instance, only an overburdened and well-conducted field) hospital. This point, from its peculiar location, is peculiarly adapted to this double duty service, situated as it is at one terminus of the line of entrenchments.

This part of Clara Barton's war experience is least known of all that she performed. Her diaries were unkept and as her war lectures were mostly occupied with her earlier service in the field, they make almost no reference to this important part of her work. It is through her letters that we know something of what she experienced and accomplished in the closing months of 1864, and the early months of 1865. There is less material here of the kind that makes good newspaper copy or lecture material than was afforded by her earlier work in the open field, and it is probably on this account that this period has fallen so much into the shadow of for-



getfulness that it has sometimes been said that Clara Barton retired from active service after the Wilderness campaign. Two letters, one to Frances Childs Vassall, and the other to Annie Childs, give somewhat intimate pictures of her life in this period, and may be selected out of her correspondence for that purpose.

TENTH ARMY CORPS HOSPITAL  
September 3rd, 1864

MY DARLING SIS FANNIE:

It is almost midnight, and I ought to go to bed this minute, and I want to speak to you first, and I am going to indulge my inclination just a little minute till this page is down, if no more; but it will be all egotism, so be prepared, and don't blame me. I know you are doing well and living just as quietly and happily as you deserve to do. I hear from no one, and indeed I scarce write at all; and no one would wonder if they could look in upon my family and know besides that we had *moved* this week — yes, *moved* a family of fifteen hundred sick men, and had to keep our housekeeping up all the time; and no one to be ready at hand and ask us to take tea the first night either.

I have never told you how I returned — well, safely, and got off from City Point and my goods off its dock *just in time* to avoid that terrible catastrophe. I was not blown to atoms, but might have been and no one the wiser. I found my "sick family" somewhat magnified on my return, and soon the Corps (10th) was ordered to cross the James, and make a feint while the Weldon Railroad was captured, and this move threw all the sick in Regimental Hospital into our hospital, five hundred in one night. Only think of such an addition to a family between supper and breakfast and no preparation; and just that morning our old cook John and his assistant Peter both came down sick, one with inflammation of the lungs and the other with fever. It was all the sur-

geons, stewards, and clerks could do to keep the names straight and manage the official portion of the reception; and, would you believe it, I stepped into the gap and assumed the responsibility of the kitchen and feeding of our twelve hundred, and I held it and kept it straight till I selected a new boss cook and got him regularly installed and then helped him all the time up to the present day. I wish I had some of my bills of fare preserved as they read for the day. The variety is by no means so striking as the quantity. Say for breakfast seven hundred loaves of bread, one hundred and seventy gallons of hot coffee, two large wash-boilers full of tea, one barrel of apple sauce, one barrel of sliced boiled pork, or thirty hams, one half barrel of corn-starch blanc-mange, five hundred slices of butter toast, one hundred slices of broiled steak, and one hundred and fifty patients, to be served with chicken gruel, boiled eggs, etc. For dinner we have over two hundred gallons of soup, or boiled dinner of three barrels of potatoes, two barrels of turnips, two barrels of onions, two barrels of squash, one hundred gallons of minute pudding, one wash-boiler full of whiskey sauce for it, or a large washtub full of codfish nicely picked, and stirred in a batter to make one hundred and fifty gallons of nice home codfish, and the Yankee soldiers cry when they taste it (I prepared it just the old home way, and so I have everything cooked), and the same toasts and corn starch as for breakfast. And then for supper two hundred gallons of rice, and twenty gallons of sauce for it, two hundred gallons of tea, toast for a thousand, and some days I have made with my own hands ninety apple pies. This would make a pie for some six hundred poor fellows who had not tasted pie for months, it might be years, sick and could not eat much. I save all the broken loaves of bread from transportation and make bread puddings in large milk pans; about forty at once will do. The patients asked for *gingerbread*, and I got extra flour and molasses and

make it by the score. I have all the grease preserved and clarified, and to-morrow, if our new milk comes, we are to commence to make doughnuts. I have a barrel of nice lard ready (they had always burned it before to get it out of the way).

Last Saturday night we learned that we were to change with the Eighteenth Corps, and go up in front of Petersburg, and their first loads of sick came with the order. At dark I commenced to cook puddings and gingerbread, as I could carry them best. At two o'clock A.M. I had as many of these as I could carry in an ambulance, and packed my own things in an hour, and at three A.M. in the dark, started over the pontoon bridge across the Appomattox to our new base, about four miles. Got there a little before day, and got some breakfast ready about 8.30 for four hundred men that had crossed the night previous, nearly one hundred officers. The balance followed, and in eighteen hours from the receipt of the order we were all moved — but a poor change for us. Since dark forty wounded men have been brought in, many of which will prove mortal, one with the shoulder gone, a number of legs off, one with both arms gone, some blown up with shells and terribly burned, some in the breast. By request of the surgeons, I made a pail full of nice thick eggnog (eggs beaten separately and seasoned with brandy), and carried all among them, to sleep on, and chicken broth, and I have left them all falling asleep, and I have stolen away to my tent, which is as bare as a cuckoo's nest — dirt floor, just like the street, a narrow bed of straw, and a three-legged stand made of old cracker boxes, and a wash dish. A hospital tent without any fly constitutes my apartment and furnishing. And here it is one o'clock, damp and cold, one little fellow from the 11th Maine dying, whose groans have echoed through the camp for hours. Another noble Swiss boy, I fear mortally wounded, who thinks he shall not live till morning, and has gained a promise from me

that I will see him and be with him when he dies (I have still hopes of his recovery). Oh, what a volume it would make if I could only write you what I have seen, known, heard, and done since I first came to this department, June 18th. The most surprising of all of which is (tell Sally) that I should have *turned cook*. Who would have "thunk it"?

I am writing on bits of paper for want of whole sheets. I am entirely out. My dresses are equal to the occasion; the skirt is finished, but not worn yet. I am choice of it. The striped print gets soiled and washes nicely, all just right, and I have plenty, and I bless you every day for it. I want so to write Annie a good long letter, but how can I get time? Please give her from this, if you please, an idea of what I am doing, and she will not blame me so much.

Tell Sally that our purchases of tinware were just the thing, and but for them this hospital could not be kept comfortable a single day, not a meal. I wish I had as much more, and a nice stove of my own, with suitable stove furniture besides. And I think I could do as much good with it as some missionaries are supposed to do. Our spices and flavorings were Godsend when I got them here. I wish I had boxes of them. I need to use so much in my big cooking. There, I said it would be all egotism, but I am too stupid to think of anybody but myself, so forgive me. Give my love to all and write your loving Sis,

CLARA

From letters such as this we are able to rescue from oblivion a full year of war service of Clara Barton. Contrary to all her previous intent, she was a head-nurse, in charge of the hospitals of an entire army corps. Not only so, but she was on occasion chief cook and purveyor of pie and gingerbread, and picked codfish and New England boiled dinners so like what the soldiers loved at



home that they sometimes cried for joy. But she did not relinquish her purpose to be at the front. The front was very near to her. Another of her letters must be quoted:

BASE HOSPITAL, 10TH ARMY CORPS  
BROADWAY LANDING, VA.  
Sept. 14th, 1864

MY DEAR SIS ANNIE:

Your excellent and comforting letter reached me some time ago, and, like its one or two abused predecessors, has vainly waited a reply. I cannot tell how badly I have wanted to write you, how impossible I found it to get the time. But often enough an attack of illness has brought me a leisure hour, and I am almost glad that I can make it seem right for me to sit down in daylight and pen a letter.

For once in my life I am at a loss where to commence. I have been your debtor so long, and am so full of unsaid things, that I don't know which idea to let loose first. Perhaps I might as well speak of the weather. Well, it *rains*, and that is good for my conscience again, for I could n't get out in that if I were well enough. Rain here means mud, you must understand, but I am sheltered. Why, I have a *whole* house of my own, first and second floors, two rooms and a flight of stairs, and a great big fireplace, a bright fire burning, a west window below, a south one above, an east door, with a soldier-built frame arbor of cedar, twelve feet in front of it and all around it, so close and green that a cat could n't look in, unless at my side opening. It was the negro house for the plantation, and was dirty, of course, but ten men with brooms and fifty barrels of water made it all right, and they moved me into it one night when I was sick, and here I have lain and the winds have blown and the rains descended and beat upon my house, and it fell not, and for hours in the dark night I have listened to the guy ropes snapping and the tent flies flapping in the wind and rain, and thunder and lightning. All about me are the frail

habitations of my less fortunate neighbors. One night I remembered a darling little Massachusetts boy, sick of fever and chronic diarrhœa, a mere skeleton, and I knew he was lying at the very edge of his ward, tents, of course, — delicate little fellow, about fifteen, — and I could n't withstand the desire to shield him, and sent through the storm and had him brought, bed and all, and stored in my lower room, and there he lay like a little kitten, so happy, till about noon the next day, when his father, one of the wealthy merchants of Suffolk, came for him. He had just heard of his illness, had searched through the damp tents for him and finally traced him to me. The unexpected sight of his little boy, sheltered, warm, and fed, nearly deprived him of speech, but when those pale lips said, "Auntie — father — this is *my* Auntie; does n't she look like mother?" It was *too much*. Women's and children's tears amount to little, but the convulsive sobs of a strong man are not forgotten in an hour.

Well, I have made a queer beginning of this letter. One would have supposed I should have made it my first duty to speak of the nice *box* that came to me, from you, by Mrs. Rich, and how choice I was of it, and did not take it with me the first time I went for fear I might not find the most profitable spot to use it in just then till I had found my field. As good luck would have it, it did not take long to find my field of operations; and nothing but want of time to write has prevented me from acknowledging the box many times, and expressing the desire that others might follow it. I can form no estimate of what I would and should have made use of during the campaign thus far, if I had had it to use. I doubt if you at home could *realize* the necessities if I could describe every one accurately, and now the cold weather approaches, they will increase in some respects. The army is filling up with new troops to a great degree and the nights are getting cold....

I was rejoiced to hear from Lieutenant Hitchcock and

that he is doing well. You are favored in so pleasant a correspondent as I know he must be, and what a comfort to his wife to have him home so soon. I hope his wound will not disable him very much. Please give my love and congratulations to them when you write. Poor fellows! how sorry I was to see them lying there under the trees, so cut and mangled. Poor Captain Clark! Do you know if he is alive? the surgeons told me he could n't survive. I went up again to see them, a day or two after they all left. Colonel Gould had gone the day before. Yes! I lost one friend. Poor Gardner! He fought bravely and died well, they said, and laid his mangled body at the *feet of his foe*. I feel sad when I think of it all. "Tired a little" — not tired of the war, but tired of our sacrifices.

I passed a most pleasant hour with Lieutenant Hitchcock. It seemed so comfortable and withal so quaint and strange to sit down under the sighing pines of Virginia away out in the woods in the war of the guns and talk of *you*. I have asked a great many times for Mr. Chamberlain and only heard twice — he was well each time, but this was not lately. I shall surely go to him if I get near the dear old regiment (21st regiment) — that is more than I ever said of any other regiment in the service. I am a stranger to them now, I know, after all their changes; few of them ever heard of me, and yet the very mention of the number calls up all the old-time love and pride I ever had. I would divide the last half of my last loaf with any soldier in that regiment, though I had never seen him. I honor him for joining it, be he who he may; for he knew well if he marched and fought with *that* regiment he had undertaken no child's play, and those who measured steel with them knew it as well.

The Oxford ladies at work for me again!! I am very glad if they have the confidence to do so. I had thought, perhaps, my style of labor was not approved by them; but I could not help it. I knew it was *rough*, but I

thought it none the less necessary. If they do so far approve as to send me the proceeds of some of their valuable labors, it will be an additional stimulant to me to persevere.

Do you know I am thinking seriously of remaining "out" the winter unless the campaign should come to a sudden and decisive stand, and nothing be done and no one exposed.

*You* know that my range here is very extended; this department is large, and I am invited by General Butler to visit every part of it, and all medical and other officers within the department are directed to afford me every facility in their power. But so little inclination do they display to thwart me that I have *never* shown my "pass and order" to an officer since I have been in the department. I have had but one trouble since I came, and that has been to extend my labor without having the point that I leave miss me.

We have now in the 10th Corps two main hospitals and no regimental hospital; the "base," where I am at present, about four miles from the extreme front, and the "Flying" Hospital three miles farther up — in the rear of the front line of works. The most skillful operators are always here, and all the surgeons at that post are my old-time personal friends. Dr. Barlow I worked with at Cedar Mountain and through Pope's retreat, and again on Morris Island; and he says, if I am going to desert my old friends *now, just say so*, that's all. And I have stood by Dr. Porter all summer, and Porter says he will share me some with the upper hospital, but I must not leave the Corps on any condition whatever. And yet the surgeon in charge of one of the largest corps in General Grant's army at City Point came for me one day last week and would hardly be denied; wanted me to help him "run" his hospital — "not to touch a bit of the work." I begin to think I can "keep a hotel," but I did n't think so a year ago. Well, I have told you all this to show you how



probable it is that I shall find it difficult to get off the field this fall or even winter.

And thank you many times for your sisterly invitation to spend some portion of the winter with you. I should be most happy to do so, but it is a little doubtful if I get north of Washington this winter, unless the war ends suddenly, and I am beginning to study *my duty* closely. I can go to the Flying Hospital, and be just along with the active army; and then, if I had a sufficient quantity of good suitable supplies, I could keep the needy portion of a whole corps comfortably supplied; and being connected with the hospital and convalescent camp, conversant with the men, surgeons, and nurses, I could meet their wants more timely and surely than any stranger or outside organization of men could do. And ladies, most of the summer workers, will draw off, with the cool nights; men who have been accustomed to feather beds, will seek them if they can when the frost comes. Nevertheless the troops will need the same care — good warm shirts, socks, drawers, and mittens, and the sick will need the same good, well-cooked diet that they did in summer; and yet it would try me dreadfully to be among them in the cold and nothing comfortable to give them. And this corps especially never passed a winter north of South Carolina and they *will nearly freeze*, I fear. I have scraped together and given already the last warm article I have just for the few frosty nights we have had. I have n't a pair of socks or shirts or drawers for a soldier in my possession. I shall look with great anxiety now for anything to reach me, for I shall require it both on account of the increased severity of the weather and my proposed extended field of labor. I have the 4th Massachusetts Cavalry on hand, and they have a hospital of their own and a good many sick. I gave them, one day last week, the last delicacy I possessed; it was but little — some New York and New Jersey fruits; nothing from Massachusetts for them. I was sorry; I wish I had. If I go to

the Flying Hospital it will be entirely destitute of all but soldier's blankets and rations, not a bedsack or pillow, sheet or pillowcase, or stove or tin dishes, except cups and plates. Now, I should want some of all these things, and if I go I must write to some of the friends of the soldiers the wants I see, and if they are disposed they can place it in my power to make them comfortable, independent of army regulations. You know this front hospital is for operations in time of battle, and subject to move at an hour's notice, or when the shot might reach it, or the enemy press too near, and must not be encumbered with baggage. Ask Lieutenant Hitchcock to explain it to you, and he will also tell you how useful a *private* supply connected with it might be, what comfort there would be in it, and how I could distribute from such a point to the troops along the front. Now, with my best regards to the good ladies of Oxford, I am done about soldiers and hospitals.

Oh, if I had time to write! I have material enough, "dear knows," but I cannot get time to half acknowledge favors received. If some one would come and act as scribe for me, I might be the means of relating some interesting incidents; but I have not even a cook or orderly, not to say a clerk. I do not mean that I cannot have the two former, but I do not use them myself at all when I hold them in detail. I immediately get them at work for some one who I think needs them more. I am glad you see my Worcester friends. You visited at Mr. Newton's, I suppose. I hope they are well. Please give my love to them....

We are firing a salute for something at this minute, don't yet know what. We fired one over the fall of Atlanta; solid shot and shell with the guns pointed toward Petersburg. Funny salutes we get up here. Yesterday morn we had terrible firing along the whole line, but it amounted to only an artillery duel. Yet it brought us fourteen wounded, three or four mortally. What a long

letter I have written you and I am not going to apologize and I know *you* are not tired even if it is long, you are glad of it, and so am I, although it is not very interesting.

Please give my kindly and high regards to Miss Sanford and Mrs. Burleigh, Colonel De Witt, also, and all inquiring friends and write soon to your affectionate

Sis

CLARA

This letter was copied by Annie Childs, and bears this note in the handwriting of Annie Childs:

I have my friend Clara's permission to show any portion of her "poor scrawls" that I think would interest the excellent ladies who are laboring so faithfully for the good and comfort of the soldiers, and trust to their charity to overlook imperfections. Many portions of the above are copied for the benefit of persons in Worcester and other places, as I could not get time to write many copies like this, which is three fourths of my letter from her.

ANNIE E. CHILDS

It must have been something of a relief to Clara Barton to be working in a definite sphere under military authority, and not as a volunteer worker. Not that she regretted for a moment the method of her previous activity. She would never have worked cheerfully as a part of the organization commanded by Miss Dix. She had too clear ideas of her own, and saw the possibilities of too large a work for her to be content with any sort of long-range supervision. All the women who really achieved large success at the front were individualists. "Mother" Bickerdyke, for instance, took no orders from any one. General Sherman was accustomed to say of her that she ranked him. But Miss Barton's field for

volunteer service was now limited. The war was closing in, and nearing its end. Clara Barton wisely accepted a definite appointment and took up her work with the army of General Butler. How highly he esteemed her service is shown by his lifelong friendship for her, and his appointment of her to be matron of the Massachusetts Reformatory for Women.

Clara Barton knew, before she went to the Army of the James, how impossible it was to obtain ideal conditions in a military hospital. She must have been very glad that she had refused to criticize the hospitals at Hilton Head, even when she knew that things were going wrong. She had her own experience with headstrong surgeons and incompetent nurses. But on the whole her experience in the closing days of the war was satisfactory.

One incident which she had looked forward to with eager longing, and had almost given up, occurred while she was with the Army of the James. Her brother Stephen was rescued.

It was a pathetic rescue. He was captured by the Union army, and robbed of a considerable sum of money which had been in his possession. When he was brought within the Union lines, he was sick, and he suffered ill treatment after his capture. The date of his capture was September 25, 1864. It was some days before Miss Barton learned about it. She then reported the matter to General Butler, and it was at once ordered that Stephen be brought to his headquarters with all papers and other property in his possession at the time of his capture. The prisoner was sent and such papers as had been preserved, but the money was not recovered. Two long letters, written by Stephen Barton from the hospital,



tell the story of his life within the Confederate lines, and it is a pathetic story.

Stephen Barton was treated with great kindness while he remained in the hospital at Point of Rock. He was there during the assault on Petersburg, and well toward the end of the campaign against Richmond. Then he was removed to Washington, where, on March 10, 1865, he died. Miss Barton had the satisfaction of ministering to him during those painful days, and she afterward wrote down her recollection of a prayer he offered one night after a battle in front of Richmond:

An hour with my dear noble brother Stephen, during a night after a battle in front of Richmond.

CLARA BARTON

*My brother Stephen, when with me in front of Richmond*

Hearing a voice I crept softly down my little confiscated stairway and waited in the shadows near his bedside. He had turned his face partly into his pillow and, resting it upon his hands, was at prayer. The first words which my ear caught distinctly were, "O God, whose children we all are, look down with thine eye of justice and mercy upon this terrible conflict, and weaken the wrong and strengthen the right till this unequal contest close. O God, save my Country. Bless Abraham Lincoln and his armies." A sob from me revealed my presence. He started, and, raising his giant skeleton form until he rested upon his elbow, he said, "I thought I was alone." Then, turning upon me a look of mingled anxiety, pity, and horror, which I can never describe, he asked hastily, "Sister, what are those incessant sounds I hear? The whole atmosphere is filled with them; they seem like the mingled groans of human agony. I have not heard them before. Tell me what it is." I could not speak the words that would so shock his sensitive nature,

Washington

Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>, 1865.

To President Lincoln

Dear Sir,

Miss Boston

calls on you for a humane object  
and I hope you will grant  
my request. It will cost nothing.  
She has given three years  
to the cause of our ~~bad~~ <sup>bad</sup> ~~dear~~ <sup>dear</sup>  
and is worthy to see the ~~unhappy~~  
-dear.

Yours  
M. Wilson



but could only stand before him humbled and penitent as if I had something to do with it all, and feel the tears roll over my face. My silence confirmed his secret suspicions, and raising himself still higher, and every previous expression of his face intensifying tenfold, he exclaimed, "Are these the groans of wounded men? Are they so many that my senses cannot take them in? — that my ear cannot distinguish them?" And raising himself fully upright and clasping his bony hands, he broke forth in tones that will never leave me. "O our God, in mercy to the poor creatures thou hast called into existence, send down thine angels either in love or wrath to stay this strife and bid it cease. Count the least of these cries as priceless jewels, each drop of blood as ruby gems, and let them buy the Freedom of the world. Clothe the feet of thy messengers with the speed of the lightning and bid them proclaim, through the sacrifices of a people, a people's freedom, and, through the sufferings of a nation, a nation's peace." And there, under the guns of Richmond, amid the groans of the dying, in the darkling shadows of the smoky rafters of an old negro hut by the rude chimney where the dusky form of the bondman had crouched for years, on the ground trodden hard by the foot of the slave, I knelt beside that rough couch of boards and sobbed "Amen" to the patriot prayer that rose above me.

The stolen money was never restored. Stephen struggled on a few weeks longer, alternating, hoping, and despairing, suffering from the physical abuse he had received, crushed in spirit, battling with disease and weakness as only a brave man can, worrying over his unprotected property and his debts in the old home he never reached, watching the war, and praying for the success of the Union armies, and died without knowing — and God be praised for this — that the reckless torches of that same Union army would lay in ashes and ruins the



result of the hard labor of his own worn-out life and wreck the fortunes of his only child.

Although doubting and fearing, we had never despaired of his recovery, until the morning when he commenced to sink and we saw him rapidly passing away. He was at once aware of his condition and spoke of his business, desiring that, first of all, when his property could be reached, his debts should be faithfully paid. A few little minutes more and there lay before us, still and pitiful, all that remained to tell of that hard life's struggle and battle, which had failed most of all through a great-hearted love for humanity, his faithfulness to what he conceived to be his duty, and his readiness to do more for mankind than it was willing to do for itself.

Clara Barton did not long continue in hospital service after the immediate need was passed. With the firing of the last gun she returned to Washington. One chapter in her career was closed. Another and important work was about to open, and she already had it in mind. But the work she had done was memorable, and its essential character must not be forgotten.

Clara Barton was more and other than a hospital nurse. She was not simply one of a large number of women who nursed sick soldiers. She did that, hastening to assist them at the news of the very first bloodshed, and continuing until Richmond had fallen. Hers was the distinction of doing her work upon the actual field of battle; of following the cannon so as to be on the ground when the need began; of not waiting for the wounded soldier to be brought to the hospital, but of conveying the hospital to the wounded soldier. Others followed her in this good work; others accompanied her and were her faithful associates, but she was, in a very real sense, the

soul and inspiration of the movement which carried comfort to wounded men while the battle was still in progress. She was not, in any narrow sense, a hospital nurse; she was, as she has justly been called, "the angel of the battlefield."

One characteristic of Clara Barton during these four years deserves mention and emphasis because her independent position might have made it easy for her to assume a critical attitude toward those who worked under the regular organization or through different channels. In all her letters, in all the entries in her diaries, there is found no hint of jealousy toward any of the women who worked as nurses in the hospitals, or under the Sanitary or Christian Commission.

Clara Barton from her childhood was given to versifying. She was once called upon to respond to a toast to the women who went to the front. She did it in rhyme as follows:

#### TOAST

##### "THE WOMEN WHO WENT TO THE FIELD"

The women who went to the field, you say,  
 The *women* who went to the field; and pray  
 What did they go for? just to be in the way! —  
 They'd not know the difference betwixt work and play,  
 What did they know about *war* anyway?  
 What could they *do*? — of what *use* could they be?  
 They would scream at the sight of a gun, don't you see?  
 Just fancy them round where the bugle notes play,  
 And the long roll is bidding us on to the fray.  
 Imagine their skirts 'mong artillery wheels,  
 And watch for their flutter as they flee 'cross the fields  
 When the charge is rammed home and the fire belches  
                   hot; —  
 They never will wait for the answering shot.

They would faint at the first drop of blood, in their sight.  
What fun for us boys, — (ere we enter the fight;)  
They might pick some lint, and tear up some sheets,  
And make us some jellies, and send on their sweets,  
And knit some soft socks for Uncle Sam's shoes,  
And write us some letters, and tell us the news.  
And thus it was settled by common consent,  
That husbands, or brothers, or whoever went,  
That the place for the women was in their own homes,  
There to patiently wait until victory comes.  
But later, it chanced, just how no one knew,  
That the lines slipped a bit, and some 'gan to crowd through;  
And they went, — where did they go? — Ah; where did they  
not?

Show us the battle, — the field, — or the spot  
Where the groans of the wounded rang out on the air  
That her ear caught it not, and her hand was not there,  
Who wiped the death sweat from the cold clammy brow,  
And sent home the message; — " 'T is well with him now"?  
Who watched in the tents, whilst the fever fires burned,  
And the pain-tossing limbs in agony turned,  
And wet the parched tongue, calmed delirium's strife  
Till the dying lips murmured, "My Mother," "My Wife"!  
And who were they all? — They were many, my men:  
Their record was kept by no tabular pen:  
They exist in traditions from father to son.  
Who recalls, in dim memory, now here and there one.—  
A few names were writ, and by chance live to-day;  
But's a perishing record fast fading away.  
Of those we recall, there are scarcely a score,  
Dix, Dame, Bickerdyke, — Edson, Harvey, and Moore,  
Fales, Whittenmeyer, Gilson, Safford and Lee,  
And poor Cutter dead in the sands of the sea;  
And Frances D. Gage, our "Aunt Fanny" of old,  
Whose voice rang for freedom when freedom was sold.  
And Husband, and Etheridge, and Harlan and Case,  
Livermore, Alcott, Hancock, and Chase,  
And Turner, and Hawley, and Potter, and Hall.  
Ah! the list grows apace, as they come at the call:  
Did these women quail at the sight of a gun?  
Will some soldier tell us of one he saw run?

Will he glance at the boats on the great western flood,  
At Pittsburg and Shiloh, did they faint at the blood?  
And the brave wife of Grant stood there with them then,  
And her calm, stately presence gave strength to his men.  
And *Marie of Logan*; she went with them too;  
A bride, scarcely more than a sweetheart, 't is true.  
Her young cheek grows pale when the bold troopers ride.  
Where the "Black Eagle" soars, she is close at his side,  
She staunches his blood, cools the fever-burnt breath,  
And the wave of her hand stays the Angel of Death;  
She nurses him back, and restores once again  
To both army and state the brave leader of men.

She has smoothed his black plumes and laid them to sleep,  
Whilst the angels above them their high vigils keep:  
And she sits here *alone*, with the snow on her brow —  
Your cheers for her comrades! Three cheers for her now.  
And these were the women who went to the war:  
The women of question; what *did* they go for?  
Because in their hearts God had planted the seed  
Of pity for woe, and help for its need;  
They saw, in high purpose, a duty to do,  
And the armor of right broke the barriers through.  
Uninvited, unaided, unsanctioned oft-times,  
With pass, or without it, they pressed on the lines;  
They pressed, they implored, till they ran the lines through,  
And *this* was the "running" the men saw them do.  
'T was a hampered work, its worth largely lost;  
'T was hindrance, and pain, and effort, and cost:  
But through these came knowledge, — knowledge is power. —  
And never again in the deadliest hour  
Of war or of peace, shall we be so beset  
To accomplish the purpose our spirits have met.  
And what would they do if war came again?  
The *scarlet cross floats* where all was blank then.  
They would bind on their "*brassards*" and march to the fray,  
And the man liveth not who could say to them nay;  
They would stand with you now, as they stood with you then,  
The nurses, consolers, and saviors of men.



## CHAPTER XIX

### ANDERSONVILLE AND AFTER

CLARA BARTON's name continued on the roll of clerks in the Patent Office until August, 1865. She drew her salary as a clerk throughout the period of the Civil War, and it was the only salary that she drew during that time. Out of it she paid the clerk who took her place during the latter months of her employment, and also the rent of the room in Washington, where she stored her supplies and now and then slept. When she was at the front, she shared the rations of the army. Most of the time her food was the food of the officers of the division where she was at work. Much of the time it was the humble fare of the common soldier. Mouldy and even wormy hardtack grew to be quite familiar to her, and was eaten without complaint.

As the end of the war drew near, she discovered a field of service in which her aid was greatly needed. Every battle in the Civil War had, in addition to its list of known dead and wounded, a list of "missing." Some of these missing soldiers were killed and their bodies not found or identified. Of the 315,555 graves of Northern troops, only 172,400 were identified. Almost half of the soldiers buried in graves known to the quartermaster of the Federal army were unidentified; 143,155 were buried in graves known to be the graves of soldiers, but with no soldier's name to mark them. Besides these there were 43,973 recorded deaths over and above the number of graves. The total of deaths recorded was

359,528, while the number of graves, as already stated, was 315,555. As a mere matter of statistics, this may not seem to mean very much, but it actually means that nearly two hundred thousand homes received tidings of the death of a father, son, or brother, and did not know where that loved one was buried. This added to grief the element of uncertainty, and in many cases of futile hope.

Moreover, there were many other thousands of men reported missing of whom no certain knowledge could be obtained at the close of the Civil War. Some were deserters, some were bounty-jumpers, some were prisoners, some were dead. Clara Barton received countless letters of inquiry. From all over the country letters came asking whether in any hospital she had seen such and such a soldier.

Clearly foreseeing that the end of the war was in sight, Clara Barton, who had gone from City Point, where she was serving with General Butler's army, to Washington, where she witnessed the death of her brother Stephen, brought to the attention of President Lincoln the necessity of instituting some agency for the finding of missing soldiers. She knew what her own family had suffered in the anxious months when Stephen was immured within the Confederate lines, and his relatives did not know whether he was living or dead. President Lincoln at once approved her plan, and issued a letter advising the friends of missing soldiers to communicate with Miss Barton at Annapolis, where she established her headquarters. President Lincoln's letter was dated March 11, 1865, the day following the death of her brother Stephen. This was followed, March 25, by a letter from General Hitchcock:

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 25, 1865

FOR THE COMMANDING OFFICER AT ANNAPOLIS, MD.

SIR:

The notice, which you have doubtless seen, over the name of Miss Barton, of Massachusetts, proffering her services in answering inquiries with respect to Union officers and soldiers who have been prisoners of war (or who remain so), was made by my authority under the written sanction of His Excellency the President.

The purpose is so humane and so interesting in itself that I beg to recommend Miss Barton to your kind civilities, and to say that any facilities which you may have it in your power to extend to her would be properly bestowed, and duly appreciated, not only by the lady herself, but by the whole country which is interested in her self-appointed mission.

With great resp. your obt. servant

(Signed) E. A. HITCHCOCK

Major. Gen'l. Vols.

Although she was backed by the authority of the President, it took the War Department two months to establish Clara Barton in her work at Annapolis with the title "General Correspondent for the Friends of Paroled Prisoners." A tent was assigned her, with furniture, stationery, clerks, and a modest fund for postage. By the time she was established at Annapolis, she found bushels of mail awaiting her, and letters of inquiry came in at the rate of a hundred a day. To bring order out of this chaos, and establish a system by which missing soldiers and their relatives could be brought into communication with each other, called for swift action and no little organizing skill. For a time difficulties seemed to increase. Discharged prisoners returned from the South by thousands. In some cases there was no record, in

others the record was defective. Inquiries came in much faster than information in response to them.

Notwithstanding all the difficulties, Clara Barton had a long list of missing men ready for publication by the end of May. Then the question rose how she was to get it published. It was not wholly a matter of expense, though this was an important item. There was only one printing office in Washington which had type enough, and especially capitals enough, to set up such a roll as at that time she had ready. In this emergency she appealed directly to the President of the United States, asking that the roll be printed at the Government Printing Office. Her original letter to President Johnson is in existence, together with a series of endorsements, the last of them by Andrew Johnson himself. General Rucker was the first official to endorse it, Major-General Hitchcock added his commendation, General Hoffman followed, then came General Grant, and last of all the President:

WASHINGTON, D.C., May 31st, 1865

HIS EXCELLENCY

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

SIR:

May I venture to enclose for perusal the within circular in the hope that it may to a certain extent explain the object of the work in which I am engaged. The undertaking having at its first inception received the cordial and written sanction of our late beloved President, I would most respectfully ask for it the favor of his honored successor.

The work is indeed a large one; but I have a settled confidence that I shall be able to accomplish it. The fate of the unfortunate men failing to appear under the



search which I shall institute is likely to remain forever unrevealed.

My rolls are now ready for the press; but their size exceeds the capacity of any private establishment in this city, no printer in Washington having forms of sufficient size or a sufficient number of capitals to print so many names.

It will be both inconvenient and expensive to go with my rolls to some distant city each time they are to be revised. In view of this fact I am constrained to ask our honored President, when he shall approve my work, as I must believe he will, to direct that the printing may be done at the Government Printing Office.

I may be permitted to say in this connection that the enclosed printed circular appealing for pecuniary aid did not originate in any suggestion of mine, but in the solicitude of personal friends, and that thus far, in whatever I may have done, I have received no assistance either from the Government or from individuals. A time may come when it will be necessary for me to appeal directly to the American People for help, and in that event, such appeal will be made with infinitely greater confidence and effect, if my undertaking shall receive the approval and patronage of Your Excellency.

I have the honor to be, Sir

Most respectfully

Your obedient servant

CLARA BARTON

*Official endorsements on back of her letter*

CHIEF QUARTERMASTER'S OFFICE  
DEPOT OF WASHINGTON

June 2, 1865

I most heartily concur in the recommendations on this paper. I have known Miss Barton for a long time and it gives me great pleasure to aid her in her good works.

F. H. RUCKER  
Brig. Gen'l & Chf. Q.M.



Washington, D. C. May 31<sup>st</sup> 1865.

His Excellency  
President of the United States

Sir,

May I venture to enclose for perusal the within circular in the hope that it may to a certain extent explain the object of the work in which I am engaged. The undertaking having at its first inception received the cordial and written sanction of our late beloved President, I would most respectfully ask for it the favor of his honored successor.

The work is, indeed, a large one; but I have a settled confidence that I shall be able to accomplish it. The fate of the unfortunate men failing to appear under the search which I shall institute is likely to remain forever unremoved.

My rolls are now ready for the press; but their size exceeds the capacity of any private establishment in this city, no printer in Washington having forms of sufficient size; or a sufficient number of capitals to print so many names.

It will be both inconvenient and expensive to go with my rolls to some distant city, each time they are to be revised. In view of this fact I am constrained to ask our Honored President, when he shall approve my work, as I must believe he will, to direct that the printing may be done at the U. S. Government Printing Office.

I may be permitted to say in this connection, that the enclosed printed circular appealing for pecuniary aid did not originate in any suggestion of mine, but in the solicitude of personal friends, and that thus far, in whatever I may have done I have received no assistance either from the Government, or from individuals. A time may come when it will be necessary for me to appeal directly to the American People for help, and in that event, such appeal will be made with infinitely greater confidence and effect, if my undertaking shall receive the approval and patronage of your Excellency.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Most respectfully

Your obedient servant,  
Clara Barton







The undersigned, with a full understanding of the benevolent purpose of Miss Barton and of its deep interest for the public, most cordially commends it to the approval of the President of the United States.

E. A. HITCHCOCK

Maj. Gen. Vol.

June 2, 1865

I most heartily concur in the foregoing recommendations.

W. HOFFMAN

Com. Gen'l Pris.

Respectfully recommended that the printing asked for be authorized at the Government Printing Office. The object being a charitable one, to look up and ascertain the fate of officers and soldiers who have fallen into the hands of the enemy and have never been restored to their families and friends, is one which Government can well aid.

U. S. GRANT

L.G.

June 2d, 1865 .

June 3d, 1865

Let this printing be done as speedily as possible consistently with the public interest.

ANDREW JOHNSON

Prest. U.S.

TO MR. DEFREES

Supt. Pub. Printing

On the same date, June 2, 1865, Miss Barton received a pass from General Grant commending her to the kind consideration of all officers and instructing them to give her all facilities that might be necessary in the prosecution of her mission. By General Grant's order, there

was also issued to her transportation for herself and two assistants on all Government railroads and transports:

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 2d, 1865

The bearer hereof, *Miss Clara Barton*, who is engaged in making inquiries concerning the fate of soldiers reported as missing in action, is commended to the kind consideration of all officers of the military service, and she will be afforded by commanders and others such facilities in the prosecution of her charitable mission as can properly be extended to her.

U. S. GRANT

Lieut. General Comdg.

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 2nd, 1865

*Miss Clara Barton*, engaged in making inquiries for soldiers reported as missing in action, will be allowed, until further orders, with her assistants, not to exceed two in number, free transportation on all Government railroads and transports.

By Command of Lieut.-General Grant

T. S. BRECK

Asst. Adjt. Genl.

Clara Barton had learned the value of publicity. She knew that the Press could be counted upon to assist an undertaking so near to the hearts of all readers of the papers. She therefore arranged her lists by States, and sent the list of each State to every newspaper in the State with the request for its free publication. Before long she had established definite connections with scores of newspapers which responded favorably to her request. No one read these lists more eagerly than recently discharged men, including prisoners and men released from

hospitals. In innumerable instances these men wrote to her to give information of the death or survival, with location, of some comrade whose name had been published in one of her lists.

Sometimes she succeeded not only beyond her own expectation, but beyond the desire of the man who was sought. Occasionally a soldier who went into voluntary obscurity at the end of the war found himself unable to remain in as modest a situation as he had chosen for himself. A few letters are found of men who indignantly remonstrated against being discovered by their relatives. One such case will serve as an illustration. The first of the following letters is from the sister of a missing soldier. The second, six months later, is a protest from the no longer missing man, and the third is Clara's indignant reply to him:

LOCKPORT, N.Y., April 17th, 1865

MISS CLARA BARTON

DEAR MADAM:

Seeing a notice in one of our village papers stating that you can give information concerning soldiers in the army or navy, you will sincerely oblige me if you can give any intelligence of my brother, Joseph H. H——, who was engaged in the 2nd Maryland Regiment under General Goldsborough, and from whom we have not heard in nearly two years. His mother died last winter, to whom his silent absence was, I assure you, a *great grief*, and to whom I promised to make all inquiries in my power, so that I might if possible learn my brother's fate. I would most willingly remunerate you for all trouble.

Yours respectfully

E—— H——



SPRINGFIELD, ILLS., Oct. 16, 1865

MISS CLARA BARTON,  
Washington, D.C.

MADAM:

I have seen my name on a sheet of paper somewhat to my mortification, for I would like to know what I have done, so that I am worthy to have my name *blazoned* all over the country. If my friends in New York *wish* to know where I am, let them wait *until* I see fit to write them. As you are anxious of my welfare, I would say that I am just from New Orleans, discharged, on my way North, but unluckily taken with *chills* and *fever* and could proceed no farther for some time at least. I shall remain here for a month.

Respectfully, your obt. servt.

J—— H. H——

MR. J—— H. H——

SIR:—

I enclose copies of two letters in my possession. The writer of the first I suppose to be your sister. The lady for whose death the letter was draped in mourning I suppose to have been *your mother*. Can it be possible that you were aware of that fact when you wrote that letter? *Could* you have spoken thus, knowing all?

The cause of your name having been “blazoned all over the country” was your unnatural concealment from your nearest relatives, and the great distress it caused them. “What you have done” to render this necessary *I* certainly *do not* know. It seems to have been the misfortune of your family to think more of you than you did of them, and probably more than you deserve from the manner in which you treat them. They had already waited until a son and brother possessing common humanity would have “seen fit” to write them. *Your mother died waiting*, and the result of your sister’s faithful efforts to comply with her dying request “*mor-*

*tify*" you. I cannot apologize for the part I have taken. You are mistaken in supposing that I am "anxious for your welfare." I assure you I have no interest in it, but your accomplished sister, for whom I entertain the deepest respect and sympathy, I shall inform of your existence lest you should not "see fit" to do so yourself.

I have the honor to be, sir

CLARA BARTON

Such letters as the foregoing remind us that not all the cases of missing soldiers were purely accidental. There were instances where men went to war vowing loyalty to the girls they left behind them, and who formed other ties. There were cases where men formed wholly new associations and deliberately chose to begin anew and let the past be buried. But there were thousands of instances in which the work of Clara Barton brought her enduring gratitude. In very large proportion these missing men were dead. The testimony of a comrade who had witnessed the death on the battle-field or in prison set at rest any suspicion of desertion or any other form of dishonor. In other cases, where the soldier was alive, but had grown careless about writing, her timely reminder secured a prompt reunion and saved a long period of anxiety. Letters like the following came to her to the end of her life:

GREENFIELD, MASS., Sept. 25, 1911

MISS CLARA BARTON

Oxford, Mass.

MY DEAR MISS BARTON:

I am a stranger to you, but you are far from being a stranger to me. As a member of the old Vermont Brigade through the entire struggle, I was familiar with your unselfish work at the front through those years

when we were trying to restore a broken Union, and being a prisoner of war at Andersonville at its close, my mother, not knowing whether I was alive, appealed to you for information.

Two letters bearing your signature (from Annapolis, Maryland) are in my possession, the pathos of one bearing no tidings, and the glad report of my arrival about the middle of May, 1865.

The thankful heart that received them has long been stilled, but the letters have been preserved as sacred relics.

I also have a very vivid recollection of your earnest appeal to us to notify our friends of our arrival by first mail for their sake.

If to enjoy the gratitude of a single heart be a pleasure, to enjoy the benediction of a grateful world must be sweet to one's declining years. To have earned it makes it sublime.

I have also another tie which makes Oxford seem near to me. An old tent-mate, a member of our regimental quartette, a superb soldier and a very warm friend, lies mouldering there these many years. He survived, I think, more than thirty battles only to die of consumption in January, 1870. Whenever I can I run down from Worcester to lay a flower on George H. Amidon's grave.

I write not to tax you with a reply, but simply to wish for you all manner of blessings.

Yours truly

F. J. HOSMER  
Co. I, 4th Vt.

Her headquarters at this time was theoretically at Arlington where she had a tent. Arlington was the headquarters receiving and discharging returned prisoners. But much of her work was in Washington, and the con-

stant journeys back and forth caused her to ask for a conveyance. She made her application to General William Hoffman, Commissary-General of prisoners, on June 16, 1865. Her request went the official rounds, and by the 25th of October a horse was promised as soon as a suitable one could be found. It is to be hoped that within a year or two a horse either with side-saddle or attached to a wheeled conveyance was found tethered in front of her bare lodging on the third floor of No. 488½ 7th Street, between D and E:

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 16th, 1865

BRIG.-GEN'L. WM. HOFFMAN

COMMSY. GEN'L OF PRISONERS

GENERAL:

It would not appear so necessary to explain to you the nature of my wants, as to apologize for imposing them upon you, but your great kindness to me has taught me not to fear the abuse of it in any request which seems needful.

If I say that in my present undertaking I find the duties of each day quite equal to my strength, and often of a character which some suitable mode of conveyance at my own command like the daily use of a Government wagon would materially lighten, I feel confident that you would both comprehend and believe me, but if I were to desire you to represent my wishes to the proper authorities and aid in obtaining such a facility for me, I may have carried my request to a troublesome length and could only beg your kind pardon for the liberty taken which I would most humbly and cheerfully do.

With grateful respect,

I am, General

Very truly yours

CLARA BARTON



HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 25, 1865

MISS CLARA BARTON:

I have conferred with General Wadsworth on the subject of obtaining a horse for your use, and he has directed that I place a horse at your disposal as soon as a suitable one can be found.

Very respectfully

Yr. Obt. Svt.

JOHN P. SHERBURNE

Asst. Adjt. Gen'l.

For four years Clara Barton carried on this important work for missing soldiers. She spared neither her time nor her purse. At the outset there was no appropriation that covered the necessary expenses of such a quest, and the work was of a character that would not wait. From the beginning of the year 1865 to the end of 1868 she sent out 63,182 letters of inquiry. She mailed printed circulars of advice in reply to correspondents to 58,693 persons. She wrote or caused to be written 41,855 personal letters. She distributed to be posted on bulletin boards and in public places 99,057 slips containing printed rolls. According to her estimate at the end of this heavy task, she succeeded in bringing information, not otherwise obtainable, to not less than 22,000 families of soldiers.

How valuable this work was then believed to be is shown in the fact that Congress, after an investigation by a committee which examined in detail her method and its results and the vouchers she had preserved of her expenses, appropriated to reimburse her the sum of \$15,000.

It soon became evident that one of the most important

fields for investigation was such record as could be found of the Southern prisons, especially Andersonville. To Andersonville her attention was directed through a discharged prisoner, Dorence Atwater, of Connecticut. He was in the first detachment transferred, the latter part of February, 1864, to the then new prison of Andersonville, and because of his skillful penmanship was detailed to keep a register of deaths of the prisoners. He occupied a desk next to that of General Wirz, the Confederate officer commanding the prison. Here, at the beginning of 1865, he made up a list of nearly thirteen thousand Union prisoners who died in that year, giving the full name, company and regiment, date and cause of death. Besides the official list he made another and duplicate list, which he secreted in the lining of his coat, and was able to take with him on his discharge.

At the close of the war he returned to his home in Terryville, Connecticut, where he was immediately stricken with diphtheria. Weakened and emaciated by his imprisonment, he nearly died of this acute attack. Before he was fully recovered, he was summoned to Washington, and his rolls were demanded by the Government. He gave them up and they were copied in Washington, but were not published. He wrote to Clara Barton informing her of these rolls and affirmed that by means of them he could identify almost every grave in Andersonville Prison. Clara Barton was greatly interested, and proposed to Secretary Stanton that she be sent to Andersonville and that Dorence Atwater accompany her. She proposed that there should go with them a number of men equipped with material for enclosing the cemetery with a fence, and for the marking of each grave with a suitable headboard.

Secretary Stanton received this suggestion not only with approval, but with enthusiasm. Miss Barton wrote the account of her interview with him on some loose sheets for her diary. The sheets were at least three in number, and only the second sheet is preserved. This sheet, however, covers the personal interview with Secretary Stanton. It was written at the time, and manifests his keen interest in her enterprise and desire to carry it through promptly and effectively:

On entering General Hardy's room, he asked my business. I said, "I did n't know, sir. I supposed I had some, as the Secretary sent for me." "Oh," he said, "you are Miss Barton. The Secretary is very anxious to see you," and sent a messenger to announce me. Mr. Stanton met me halfway across the room with extended hand, and said he had taken the liberty to send for me to thank me for what I had done both in the past, and in my present work; that he greatly regretted that he had not known of me earlier, as from all he now learned he feared I had done many hard things which a little aid from him would have rendered comparatively easy, but that especially now he desired to thank me for helping him *to think*; that it was not possible for him to think of everything which was for the general good, and no one knew how grateful he was to the person who put forth, among all the impracticable, interested, wild, and selfish schemes which were continually crowded upon him, one good, sensible, practical, unselfish idea that he could take up and act upon with safety and credit. You may believe that by this time my astonishment had not decreased. In the course of the next twenty minutes he informed me that he had decided to invite me (for he could not order *me*) to accompany Captain Moore, with Atwater and his register, to Andersonville, and see my suggestions carried out to my entire satisfaction; that unlimited powers as

quartermaster would be given Captain Moore to draw upon all officers of the Government in that vicinity for whatever would be desired; that a special boat would be sent with ourselves and corps of workmen, and to return only when the work was satisfactorily accomplished. To call the next day and consult with him farther in . . .

If Miss Barton's horse, which she had asked for in June, had gotten to her door more promptly than is customary in such matters of official routine, he might have grown hungry waiting for her return. As we have already noticed, permission to have the horse assigned was granted in October, which left the summer free for the Andersonville expedition. Fortunately, no long interval elapsed after Secretary Stanton's approval of the plan before the starting of the expedition. On July 8 the propeller *Virginia*, having on board headboards, fencing material, clerks, painters, letterers, and a force of forty workmen, under command of Captain James M. Moore, Quartermaster, left Washington for Andersonville, by way of Savannah. On board also were Dorence Atwater and Clara Barton. They reached Savannah on July 12, and remained there seven days, arriving at Andersonville on July 25.

Her first impressions were wholly favorable. The cemetery was in much better condition than she had been led to fear. As the bodies had been buried in regular order, and Dorence Atwater's lists were minute as to date and serial number, the task of erecting a headboard giving each soldier's name, state, company, regiment, and date of death, appeared not very difficult. On the second night of her stay in Andersonville she wrote to Secretary Stanton of the success of the undertaking and suggested



that the grounds be made a national cemetery. She assured him that for his prompt and humane action in ordering the marking of these graves the American people would bless him through long years to come. She was correct in her prediction. But for her proposal and Mr. Stanton's prompt coöperation and Dorence Atwater's presence with the list, hundreds if not thousands of graves now certainly are identified at Andersonville which would have needed to be marked "Unknown":

HON. E. M. STANTON

SEC'Y. OF WAR, UNITED STATES

SIR:

It affords me great pleasure to be able to report to you that we reached Andersonville safely at 1 o'clock P.M. yesterday, 25th inst. Found the grounds undisturbed, the stockade and hospital quarters standing protected by order of General Wilson.

We have encountered no serious obstacle, met with no accident, our entire party is well, and commenced work this morning. Any misgivings which might have been experienced are happily at an end; the original plan for identifying the graves is capable of being carried out to the letter. We can accomplish fully all that we came to accomplish, and the field is wide and ample for much more in the future. If *desirable*, the grounds of Andersonville can be made a National Cemetery of great beauty and interest. Be assured, Mr. Stanton, that for this prompt and humane action of yours, the American people will bless you long after your willing hands and mind have ceased to toil for them.

With great respect,

I have the honor to be, Sir

Your very obedient servant

CLARA BARTON

ANDERSONVILLE, GA.

July 26th, 1865

The remaining period of her work in Andersonville was fruitful in the accomplishment of all the essential results for which she had undertaken the expedition, but it resulted in strained relations between one of the officers of the expedition and Dorence Atwater, and Clara Barton came to the defense of Atwater. During her absence at Andersonville, two letters were published in a Washington paper, over her signature, alleged to have been written by her to her Uncle James. She had no Uncle James, and wrote no such letters; and she attributed the forgery, correctly or incorrectly, to this officer. Her official report to the Secretary of War contains a severe arraignment of that officer, whom she never regarded with any favor.

This is all that need be recorded of Clara Barton's great work at Andersonville, of which a volume might easily be made. She saw the Union graves marked. Out of the almost thirteen thousand graves of Union soldiers at Andersonville four hundred and forty were marked "Unknown" when she finished her work, and they were unknown only because the Confederate records were incomplete. She saw the grounds enclosed and protected, and with her own hands she raised the United States flag for the first time since their death above these men who had died for it.

But this expedition involved trouble for Atwater. When he handed over his rolls to the Government it was with the earnest request that steps be taken immediately to mark these graves. His request and the rolls had been pigeonholed. Then he had learned of Clara Barton's great work for missing soldiers and wrote her telling her that the list he had made surreptitiously and preserved with such care was gathering dust, while

thirteen thousand graves were fast becoming unidentifiable. She brought this knowledge to Secretary Stanton as has already been set forth, and Stanton ordered the rolls to be produced and sent on this expedition for Atwater's use in identification.

Dorence Atwater had enlisted at the age of sixteen in the year 1862. He was now under twenty, but he was resolute in his determination that the lists which he had now recovered should not again be taken from him. On his return from Andersonville the rolls which he had made containing the names of missing soldiers disappeared. He was arrested and questioned, and replied that the rolls were his own property. He was sent to prison in the Old Capital, was tried by a court-martial, adjudged guilty of larceny, and sentenced to be confined for eighteen months at hard labor in the State Prison at Auburn, New York, fined three hundred dollars, and ordered to stand committed until the rolls were returned.

Atwater made no defense, but issued a statement which Clara Barton probably prepared for him:

I am charged with and convicted of theft, and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment, and after that time until I shall have paid my Government three hundred dollars. I have called no witnesses, made no appeal, adduced no evidence. A soldier, a prisoner, an orphan, and a minor, I have little with which to employ counsel to oppose the Government of the United States.

Whatever I may have been convicted of, I deny the charge of theft. I took my rolls home with me that they might be preserved; I considered them mine; it had never been told or even hinted to me that they were not my own rightful, lawful property. I never denied having them, and I was not arrested for stealing my rolls, but for having declared my intention of appealing to higher

authority for justice. I supposed this to be one of the privileges of an American citizen, one of the great principles of the Government for which we had fought and suffered; but I forgot that the soldier who sacrificed his comforts and risked his life to maintain these liberties was the only man in the country who would not be allowed to claim their protection.

My offense consists in an attempt to make known to the relatives and friends the fate of the unfortunate men who died in Andersonville Prison, and if this be a crime I am guilty to the fullest extent of the law, for to accomplish it I have risked my life among my enemies and my liberty among my friends.

Since my arrest I have seen it twice publicly announced that the record of the dead of Andersonville would be published very soon; one announcement apparently by the Government, and one by Captain James M. Moore, A.G.M. No such intimation was ever given until after my arrest, and if it prove that my imprisonment accomplishes that which my liberty could not, I ought, perhaps, to be satisfied. If this serves to bring out the information so long and so cruelly withheld from the people, I will not complain of my confinement, but when accomplished, I would earnestly plead for that liberty so dear to all, and to which I have been so long a stranger.

I make this statement, which I would confirm by my oath if I were at liberty, not as appealing to public sympathy for relief, but for the sake of my name, my family, and my friends. I wish it to be known that I am not sentenced to a penitentiary as a common thief, but for attempting to appeal from the trickery of a clique of petty officers.

DORENCE ATWATER

On September 25, 1865, just one month from the day when he returned from Andersonville from the marking of the soldiers' graves, Dorence Atwater, as Clara Barton



records, "was heavily ironed, and under escort of a soldier and captain as guard, in open daylight, and in the face of his acquaintances, taken through the streets of Washington to the Baltimore depot, and placed upon the cars, a convict bound to Auburn State Prison."

Clara Barton had moved heaven and earth to save Dorence from imprisonment; had done everything excepting to advise him to give up the rolls. She knew so well what the publication of those names meant to thirteen thousand anxious homes, she was willing to see Dorence go to prison rather than that should fail. Secretary Stanton was out of Washington when Dorence was arrested. She followed him to West Point and had a personal interview, which she supplemented by a letter:

ROE'S HOTEL, WEST POINT, September 5th, 1865

HON. E. M. STANTON

SEC'Y. OF WAR, U.S.A.

MY HONORED FRIEND:

Please permit me before leaving to reply to the one kind interrogatory made by you this morning, viz: "What do you desire me to do in the case?" Simply this, sir, — do nothing, believe nothing, sanction nothing in this present procedure against Dorence Atwater until all the facts with their antecedents and bearings shall have been placed before you, and this upon your return (if no one more worthy offer) I promise to do, with all the fairness, truthfulness, and judgment that in me lie.

There is a noticeable haste manifested to dispose of the case in your absence which leads me to fear that there are those who, to gratify a jealous whim, or serve a personal ambition, would give little heed to the dangers of unmerited public criticism they might thus draw upon you, while young Atwater, honest and simple-hearted,

both loving and trusting you, has more need of your protection than your censure.

With the highest esteem, and unspeakable gratitude,  
I am, sir

CLARA BARTON

Failing to secure the release of Dorence by appeal to Secretary Stanton, who was not given to interference with military courts, Clara Barton tried the effect of public opinion and also sought to arouse the military authority of the State of Connecticut. Two letters of hers are preserved addressed to friends in the newspaper world, but they did not immediately accomplish the release of Dorence.

Clara Barton was not a woman to desist in an effort of this kind. She had set about to procure the release of Dorence Atwater; she had the support of Senator Henry Wilson and of General B. F. Butler, and she labored day and night to enlarge the list of influential friends who should finally secure his freedom. She surely would have succeeded. While the Government saw no convenient way of issuing him a pardon until he returned the missing rolls, public sentiment in his favor grew steadily under her insistent propaganda. At the end of two months' imprisonment, he was released under a general order which discharged from prison all soldiers sentenced there by court-martial for crimes less than murder. Even after the issue of the President's general order, Atwater was detained for a little time until Clara Barton made a personal visit to Secretary Stanton and informed him that Dorence was still in prison and secured the record of his trial for future use.

Then she set herself to work to secure the publication

of his rolls. He must copy them and rearrange them by States and in alphabetical order, a task of no light weight, and must then arrange with some responsible newspaper to undertake to secure their publication. Moreover, this must be done quickly and quietly, for she believed that Dorence still had an enemy who would thwart the effort if known.

The large task of copying the rolls and rearranging the names required some weeks. When it was finished, Clara Barton, who had previously thought of the New York "Times" as a possible medium of publicity on account of an expression of interest which it had published, and even had considered the unpractical idea of simultaneous publication in a number of papers, turned instead to Horace Greeley. She wrote to him in January, 1866, and then went to New York and conferred with him.

Greeley told her that the list was quite too long for publication in the columns of any newspaper. The proper thing to do, as he assured her, was to bring it out in pamphlet form at a low price, and, on the day of publication, to exploit it as widely as possible through the columns of the "Tribune." To get the list in type, read the proof, print the edition, and have it ready for delivery required some days if not weeks. Valentine's Day was fixed as that upon which the list was to appear. On February 14, 1866, the publication occurred.

Horace Greeley was a good advertiser. All through the advertising pages of the "Tribune" on that day appeared the word "ANDERSONVILLE" in a single line of capitals, varied here and there by "ANDERSONVILLE; See Advertisement on 8th page." No one who read that

day's "Tribune" could escape the word "Andersonville." The editorial page contained the following paragraph:

We have just issued a carefully compiled *List of the Union Soldiers Buried at Andersonville* — arranged alphabetically under the names of their respective States, and containing every name that has been or can be recovered. Aside from the general and mournful interest felt in these martyrs personally, this list will be of great importance hereafter in the settlement of estates, etc. A copy should be preserved for reference in every library, however limited. It constitutes a roll of honor wherein our children's children will point with pride to the names of their relatives who died that their country might live. See advertisement.

The eighth page contained a half-page article by Clara Barton, telling in full of the marking of the Andersonville graves. This article was hailed with nation-wide interest, and the pamphlet had an enormous circulation, bringing comfort to thousands of grief-stricken homes.

Dorence Atwater never recovered from his treatment at the hands of the United States Government. For many years the record of the court-martial stood against him, and his status was that of a released prisoner still unpardoned. His spirit became embittered, and he said that the word "soldier" made him angry, and the sight of a uniform caused him to froth at the mouth. The Government gave him a consulship in the remote Seychelles Islands, and later transferred him to the Society Islands in the South Pacific. He died in November, 1910, and his monument is erected near Papeete on the Island of Tahiti.



## CHAPTER XX

### ON THE LECTURE PLATFORM

AT the close of the Civil War, Clara Barton wanted to write a book. Other women who had engaged in war work were writing books, and the books were being well received. She had as much to tell as any other one woman, and she thought she would like to tell it.

In this respect she was entirely different from Miss Dorothea Dix. She met Miss Dix now and then during the war, and made note of the fact in her diary, but either because these meetings occurred in periods when she was too busy to make full record, or because nothing of large importance transpired between them, she gives no extended account of them. Miss Dix was superintendent of female nurses, and Miss Barton was doing an independent work, so there was little occasion for them to meet. But all her references to Miss Dix which show any indication of her feeling manifest a spirit of very cordial appreciation of Dorothea Dix's work. Miss Dix managed her work in her own line, insisting that nurses whom she appointed should be neither young nor good-looking, and fighting her valiant battles with quite as much success as in general could have been expected. But Dorothea Dix had no desire for publicity. She shrank from giving to the world any details of her own life, partly because of her unhappy childhood memories, and partly because she did not believe in upholding in the mind of young women the successful career of an unmarried woman. Accepting as she did her own lonely

career, and making it a great blessing to others, she did not desire that young women should emulate it or consider it the ideal life. She wished instead that they should find lovers, establish homes, and become wives and mothers.

Clara Barton, too, had very high regard for the home, and she saw quite enough of the folly of sentimental young women who were eager to rush to the hospitals and nurse soldiers, but she did not share Miss Dix's fear of an attractive face, and she knew rather better than Miss Dix the value of publicity. Timid as she was by nature, she had discovered the power of the Press. She had succeeded in keeping up her supply of comforts for wounded soldiers largely by the letters which she wrote to personal friends and to local organizations of women in the North. She made limited but effective use of the newspaper for like purposes. At first she did not fully realize her own gift as a writer. Once or twice she bemoaned in her diary the feebleness of her descriptive effort. If she could only make people see what she had actually seen, she could move their hearts, and the supply of bandages and delicacies for her wounded men would be unfailing.

Her search for missing soldiers led her to a larger utilization of the Press, and gave her added confidence in her own descriptive powers. Her name was becoming more and more widely known, and she thought a book by her, if she could procure means to publish it, would afford her opportunity for self-expression and quite possibly be financially profitable.

On this subject she wrote two letters to Senator Henry Wilson. They are undated, and it is probable that she

never sent either of them, but they show what was in her heart. One of these reads as follows:

MY ALWAYS GOOD FRIEND:

Among all the little trials, necessities, and wants, real or imaginary, that I have from time to time brought and laid down at your feet, or even upon your shoulders, your patience has never once broken, or if it did your broad charity concealed the rent from me, and I come now in the hope that this may not prove to be the last feather. It is not so much that I want you to *do* anything as to listen and advise, and it may be all the more trying as I desire the advice to be plain, candid, and honest even at the risk of wounding my pride.

Perhaps no previous proposition of mine, however wild, has ever so completely astonished you as the present is liable to do. Well, to end suspense. *I am desirous of writing a book.* You will very naturally ask two questions — what for and what of. In reply to the first. The position which I have assumed before the public renders some general exposition necessary. They require to be made acquainted with me, or perhaps I might say they should either be made to know more of me or less. As it is, every one knows my name and something of what I am or have been doing, but not one in a thousand has any idea of the manner in which I propose to serve them. Out of six thousand letters lying by me, probably not two hundred show any tolerably clear idea of the writer as to what use I am to make of that very letter. People tell me the color of the hair and eyes of the friends they have lost, as if I were expected to go about the country and search them. They ask me to send them full lists of the lost men of the army; they tell me that they have looked all through my list of missing men and the name of their son or husband or somebody's else is not on it, and desire to be informed why he is made an exception. They suppose me a part of the Govern-

ment and it is my duty to do these things, or that I am carrying on the "business" as a means of revenue and ask my price, as if I hunted men at so much per head. But all suppose me either well paid or abundantly able to dispense with it; and these are only a few of the vague ideas which present themselves in my daily mail. A fair history of what I have done and desire to do, and a plain description of the practical working of my system, would convince people that I am neither sorceress nor spiritualist and would appall me with less of feverish hope and more of quiet, potent faith in the final result.

Then there is all of Andersonville of which I have never written a word. I have not even contradicted the base forgeries which were perpetrated upon me in my absence. I need not tell you how foully I am being dealt by in this whole matter and the crime which has grown out of the wickedness which overshadows me. I need to tell some plain truths in a most inexpensive manner, that the whole country shall not be always duped and honest people sacrificed that the ambition of one man be gratified. I do not propose controversy, but I have a truth to speak; it belongs to the people of our country and I desire to offer it to them.

And lastly, if a suitable work were completed and found salable and any share of proceeds fell to me, I need it in the prosecution of the work before me.

Next — What of? The above explanation must have partially answered that I would give the eight months' history of my present work, and I think I might be permitted by the writers to insert occasionally a letter sent me by some noble wife or mother, and there are no better or more touching letters written.

I would show how the expedition to Andersonville grew out of this very work; how inseparably connected the two were; and how Dorence Atwater's roll led directly to the whole work of identifying the graves of the thirteen thousand sleeping in that city of the dead.



I would endeavor to insert my report of the expedition now with the Secretary. I have some materials from which engravings could be made, I think, of the most interesting features of Andersonville, and my experiences with the colored people while there I believe to have been of *exceeding* interest. I would like to relate this. You recollect I have told you that they came from twenty miles around to see me to know if Abraham Lincoln was dead and if they were free. This, if well told, is a little book of itself. And if still I lack material I might go back a little and perhaps a few incidents might be gleaned from my last few years' life which would not be entirely without interest. I think I could glean enough from this ground to eke out my work, which I would dedicate to the survivors of Andersonville and the friends of the missing men of the United States Army. I don't know what title I would give it.

Now, first, I want your yes or no. If the former, I want your advice still further. Who can help me do all this? I have sounded among my friends, and all are occupied; numbers can write well, but have no knowledge of *book-making* which I suppose to be a trade in itself and one of which I am entirely ignorant. I never attempted any such thing myself and have no conceit of my own ability as a writer. I *don't think* I can write, but I would try to do something at it; might do more if there were time, but this requires to be done at once. I want a truthful, easy, and I suppose touching rather than logical book, which it appears to me would sell among the class of persons to whom I should dedicate it, and their name is legion. Now, it is no wonder that I have found no one ready to take hold and help me carry this on when it is remembered that I have not ten thousand dollars to offer them in advance, but must ask that my helper wait and share his remuneration out of the profits. If he *knew me*, he would know that I would not be illiberal, especially as pecuniary profit is but a secondary consideration.

It is of greater importance to me that I bring before the country and establish the facts that I desire than that I make a few thousand dollars out of it, but I would like to do both if I could, but the first if not the last. But I want to stand as the author and it must be my book, and it should be in very truth if I had the time to write it. I want no person to reap a laurel off it (dear knows I have had enough of that of late), but the man or woman who could and would take hold and work side by side with me in this matter, making it a heart interest, and having my interest at heart, be unselfish and noble with me as I think I would be with them, should reap pecuniary profit if there were any to reap. An experienced book-maker or publisher would understand if such a work would sell — it seems to me that it would.

Now, can you point me to any person who could either help me do this or be so kind as to inform me that I must not attempt it?

It will be noted that in this letter she indicates her present lack of means to publish such a book as she had in mind. She had not always lacked means for such an object. While her salary as a teacher had never been large, she had always saved money out of it. The habit of New England thrift was strong upon her, and her investments were carefully made so that her little fund continually augmented. Her salary in the Patent Office was fourteen hundred dollars, and for a time sixteen hundred dollars, and though she paid a part of it to her substitute during the latter portion of the war, she was able to keep up the rental of her lodging and meet her very modest personal expenses without drawing upon her savings. The death of her father brought to her a share in his estate, and this was invested in Oxford, conservatively and profitably. When she began her

search for missing soldiers, therefore, she had quite a little money of her own. She began that work of volunteer service, expecting it to be supported as her work in the field had been supported, by the free gifts of those who believed in the work. When a soldier or a soldier's mother or widow sent her a dollar, she invariably returned it.

As the work proceeded, she was led to believe that Congress would make an appropriation to reimburse her for her past expenditures, and add a sufficient appropriation for the continuance of the work. She had two influential friends at court, Senator Henry Wilson, her intimate and trusted friend, Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs of the Senate, and General Benjamin F. Butler, with whose army she had last served in the field.

She knew very well how laws were passed and official endorsements secured. She frequently interceded with her friends in high places on behalf of people or causes in whom she believed. She, in common with Miss Dix, had altercations with army surgeons, yet her diary shows her working hard to secure for them additional recognition and remuneration. On Sunday, January 29, 1865, she attempted to attend the third anniversary of the Christian Commission, but the House of Representatives was packed; thousands, she says, were turned away. That afternoon or evening Senator Wilson called on her and she talked with him concerning army surgeons: "I spoke at length with Mr. Wilson on the subject of army surgeons. I think their rank will be raised. I believe I will see Dr. Crane in the morning and make an effort to bring Dr. Buzzell here to help frame the bill."

She did exactly what she believed she would do; saw Dr. Crane, got her recommendation that Dr. Buzzell be allowed to come, and then went to the Senate. The thing she labored for was accomplished, though it called for considerable added effort.

About this same time she had a visit from a woman who was seeking to obtain the passage of a special act for her own benefit. She shared Clara Barton's bed and board, with introduction to Senator Wilson and other influential people, until the bill passed both houses, and still as Miss Barton's guest continued in almost frantic uncertainty, awaiting the President's signature. It happened at the very time Clara Barton was very desirous of getting her work for missing soldiers under way. The idea came to her in the night of February 19, 1865:

Thought much during the night, and decided to invite Mr. Brown to accompany me to Annapolis and to offer my services to take charge of the correspondence between the country and the Government officials and prisoners at that point while they continued to arrive.

Mr. Brown called upon her that very day and they agreed to go to Annapolis the next day, which they did. She nursed her brother Stephen, accomplished a large day's work, did her personal washing at nine o'clock at night, and the next day went to Annapolis. There she met Dorothea Dix; found a captain who deserved promotion, and resolved to get it for him; assisted in welcoming four boatloads of returned prisoners, and defined more clearly in her own mind the kind of work that needed to be done.

The next Sunday Senator Wilson called on her again, and she told him she had offered her services for this



work, and wanted the President's endorsement in order that she might not be interfered with. Senator Wilson offered to go with her to see President Lincoln, and they went next day, but did not succeed in seeing him. She went again next day, this time without Senator Wilson, for he was busy working on the bill for the lady who was her guest, so she sought to obtain her interview with President Lincoln through the Honorable E. B. Washburne, of Illinois. Mr. Washburne agreed to meet her at the White House, and did so, but the President was in a conference preceding a Cabinet meeting, and the Cabinet meeting, which was to begin at noon, was likely to last the rest of the day, so Mr. Washburne took her paper and said he would see the President and obtain his endorsement. She saw Senator Wilson that afternoon, and reported that her papers were still unendorsed, and General Hitchcock was advising her to go on without any formal authority. She was not disposed to do it, for she felt sure that she would no sooner get established than Secretary Stanton would interfere. The difficulty was to get at the President in those crowded days just before his second inaugural, when events both in Washington and in the field were crowding tremendously.

Senator Wilson was still interested in what she wanted to do, but was preoccupied. "He had labored all night on Miss B.'s bill." In fact Clara Barton read the probable fate of her own endeavor. Senator Wilson had given himself with such ardor to the cause of her guest that he had no time to help her. She had borrowed a set of furs to wear when she went to the President. She took them back that afternoon and wrote in her diary: "Very tired; could not reconcile my poor success; I find that

some hand above mine rules and restrains my progress; I cannot understand, but try to be patient, but still it is hard. I was never more tempted to break down with disappointment."

On Thursday, March 2, two days before the inauguration, she went again to see the President. Just as she reached the White House in the rain, she saw Secretary Stanton go in. She waited until 5.15, and Stanton did not come out. She returned home "still more and more discouraged." Her guest, also, had been out in the rain, but was overjoyed. Her bill had passed the Senate without opposition, and would go to the House next day, if not that very night. Miss Barton wrote in her diary: "I do not tell her how much I am inconvenienced by her using all my power. I have no helper left, and I am discouraged. I could not restrain the tears, and gave up to it."

It is hardly to be wondered that she almost repented of her generosity in loaning Senator Wilson to her friend when she herself had so much need of him. Nor need she be blamed for lying awake and crying while her guest slept happily on the pillow beside her. She did not often cry.

Just at this time she was doubly anxious, for Stephen, her brother, was nearing his end, and Irving Vassall, her nephew, was having hemorrhages and not long for this world, and her day's journal shows a multiplicity of cares crowding each day.

Stephen died Friday, March 10. She was with him when he died and mourned for her "dear, noble brother." She believed he had gone to meet the loved ones on the other side, and she wondered whether her mother was

not the first to welcome him. His body was embalmed, and a service was held in Washington, and another in Oxford. Between the time of Stephen's death and her departure with his body, she received her papers with the President's endorsement. General Hitchcock presented them to her. She wrote:

We had a most delightful interview. He aided me in drawing up a proper article to be published; said it would be hard, but I should be sustained through such a work, he felt, and that no person in the United States would oppose me in my work; he would stand between me and all harm. The President was there, too. I told him I could not commence just yet, and why, and he said, "Go bury your dead, and then care for others." How kind he was!

President Johnson later endorsed the work and authorized the printing of whatever matter she required at the Government Printing Office. Her postage was largely provided by the franking privilege. Her work was a great success and the time came in the following October, when it seemed certain her department was to have official status with the payment of all its necessary expenses by the Government. On Wednesday, October 4, she wrote:

Of all my days, this, I suspect, has been my greatest, and I hope my best. About six P.M. General Butler came quickly into my room to tell me that my business had been presented to both the President and Secretary of War, and fully approved by both; that it was to be made a part of the Adjutant-General's department with its own clerks and expenses, and that I was to be at the head of it, exclusively myself; that he made that a *sine qua non*, on the ground that it was proper for parents to bring up their own children; that he wished me to make out my

own programme of what would be required; and on his return he would overlook it and I could enter at once upon my labor. Who ever heard of anything like this — who but General Butler? He left at 7.30 for home. I don't know how to comport me.

On that same night she had a very different call, and the only one which the author has found referred to in all her diaries where any man approached her with an improper suggestion. Mingling as she did with men on the battle-field, living alone in a room that was open to constant calls from both men and women, she seems to have passed through the years with very little reason to think ill of the attitude of men toward a self-respecting and unprotected woman. That evening she had an unwelcome call, but she promptly turned her visitor out, went straight to two friends and told them what had been said to her, and wrote it down in her diary as a wholly exceptional incident, and with this brief comment, "Oh, what a wicked man!"

The plan to make her department an independent bureau seemed humanly certain to succeed. When, a few days later, General Butler left Washington without calling to see her, she was surprised, but thought it explained, a few days later, when the Boston "Journal" published an editorial saying that General Butler was to be given a seat in the Cabinet and to make his home in Washington.

But General Butler's plans failed. He fell into disfavor, and all that he had recommended and was still pending became anathema to the War Department. The bureau was not created, and Clara Barton's official appointment did not come.



During all this time she had been supporting her work of correspondence out of her own pocket. The time came when she invested in it the very last dollar of her quick assets. Her old friend Colonel De Witt, through whom she had obtained her first Government appointment, had invested her Oxford money. At her request he sent her the last of it, a check for \$228. She wrote in her diary: "This is the last of my invested money, but it is not the first time in my life that I have gone to the bottom of my bag. I guess I shall die a pauper, but I have n't been either stingy or lazy, and if I starve I shall not be alone; others have. Went to Mechanics' Bank and got my check cashed."

She certainly had not been lazy, and she never was stingy with any one but herself. Keeping her own expenses at the minimum and living so frugally that she was sometimes thought parsimonious, she saw her last dollar of invested money disappear, and recorded a grim little joke about her poverty and the possibility of starvation. But she shed no tears. In the few times when she broke down and wept, the occasion was not her own privation or personal disappointment, but the failure of some plan through which she sought to be of service to others.

This is a rather long retrospect, but it explains why Clara Barton, when she wanted to publish a book, contemplated the cost of it as an item beyond her personal means. She could have published the book at her own expense had it not been for the money she had spent for others.

Congress did not permit her to lose the money which she had expended. In all her diary and correspondence

no expression of fear has been found as to her own remuneration. She thought it altogether likely she could get her money back, but there is no hint that she would have mourned, much less regretted what she had done, if she had never seen her money again.

Sad days came for Clara Barton when she found that General Butler was worse than powerless to aid her work. Heartily desirous of assisting her as he was, his name was enough to kill any measure which he sponsored. When Senator Wilson came to see her, just before Christmas, and told her that the plan was hopeless, she was already prepared for it. He suspected that she was nearly out of money, and tried to make her a Christmas gift of twenty dollars, but she declined. She wakened, on these mornings, "with the deepest feeling of depression and despair that I remember to have known." But this feeling gave place to another. Waking in the night and thinking clearly, she was able to outline the programme of the next day's task so distinctly and unerringly that she began to wonder whether the spirit of her noble brother Stephen was not guiding her. She did not think she was a Spiritualist, but it seemed to her that some influence which he was bringing to her from her mother helped to shape her days aright. It was such a night's meditation that made plain to her that Dorence Atwater, released but not pardoned, must get his list published immediately, and that he must do it without a cent of compensation so that no one should ever be able to say that he had stolen the list in order to profit by it. She found that she did not need many hours' sleep. If she could rest with an untroubled mind, she could waken and think clearly.

Gradually, her plan to publish a book changed. Instead she would write a lecture. She went to hear different women speakers, and was gratified whenever she found a woman who could speak in public effectively. A woman preacher came to Washington, and she listened to her. Even in the pulpit a woman could speak acceptably. When she traveled on the train, she was surprised and gratified to find how many people knew her, and she came to believe that the lecture platform offered her a better opportunity than the book.

There was one other consideration, — a book would cost money for its publication and the getting of it back was a matter of uncertainty. But the lecture platform promised to be immediately remunerative.

She conferred with John B. Gough. She read to him a lecture which she prepared. Said he, "I never heard anything more touching, more thrilling, in my life." He encouraged her to proceed.

Thus encouraged, Clara Barton laid out her itinerary, and prepared for three hundred nights upon the platform. Her rates were one hundred dollars per night, excepting where she spoke under the auspices of the Grand Army Post, when her charge was seventy-five.

She took Dorence Atwater with her to look after her baggage and see to her comfort, and exhibit a box of relics which he had brought from Andersonville. She paid his expenses and a salary besides. Sometimes she thought he earned it, and sometimes she doubted it, for he was still a boy and exhibited a boy's limitations. But she cherished a very sincere affection for him and to the end of her life counted him as one of her own kin.

During this period she had abundant time to write

in her diary; for, while there were long journeys, the ordinary distance from one engagement to another was not great. She lectured in the East in various New England cities, in Cooper Institute in New York, and in cities and moderate-sized towns through Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska. She had time to record and did record all the little incidents of her journey, together with the exact sum she received for each lecture, with every dime which she expended for travel, hotel accommodation, and incidental expenses. It was a hard but varied and remunerative tour. It netted her some twelve thousand dollars after deducting all expenses.

A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers;  
There was lack of woman's nursing, there was dearth of  
woman's tears;

But a comrade stood beside him, as the life-blood ebbed away,  
And bent with pitying glances to hear what he might say;  
The dying soldier faltered,—'as he took that comrade's hand,—  
And said, "I never more shall see my own — my native land.  
Take a message and a token to some distant friend of mine,  
For I was born at Bingen, fair Bingen on the Rhine."

With this quotation from the familiar but effective poem of Mrs. Norton, Clara Barton opened her first public lecture, which she delivered at Poughkeepsie, on Thursday evening, October 25, 1866. The lecture was an hour and a quarter in length as she read it aloud in her room, but required about an hour and a half as she delivered it before a public audience. It was, as she recorded in her diary, "my first lecture," and "the beginning of remunerative labor" after a long period in which she had been without salary. She knew that it was her first lecture, but the audience did not. She re-



turned from it to the house of Mr. John Mathews, where she was entertained, ate an ice-cream, went to bed and slept well. She received her first fee of one hundred dollars. On Saturday night she spoke in Schenectady, where she received fifty dollars, and found, what many a lecturer has learned, that it was not profitable to cut prices. A diminished fee means less local advertising. The audience was smaller and less appreciative. On Monday evening she spoke in Brooklyn. Theodore Tilton presided and introduced her. There she had an ovation. Mr. Tilton accompanied her to her hotel after the lecture, and she told him that she was just beginning, and asked for his criticism. He told her the lecture contained no flaw for him to mend. She went back to Washington enthusiastic over the success of her new venture. She had spoken three times, and two of the lectures had been a pronounced success. Her expenses had been less than fifty dollars, and she was two hundred dollars to the good.

She found awaiting her in Washington a large number of requests to lecture in different places, and she arranged a New England tour. She began with Worcester and Oxford. She did this with many misgivings, not forgetting the lack of honor for a prophet in his own country. She spoke in Mechanic's Hall in Worcester, before a full house. She got her hundred dollars, but was not happy over the lecture. In Oxford, however, things went differently. She had a good house, and "the pleasantest lecture I shall ever deliver. Raced home all happy and at rest. My best visit at home." Here she refused to receive any fee, placing the proceeds of the lecture in the hands of the overseers of the poor.

She lectured at Salem, at Marlborough, and then at Newark, and again returned to Washington convinced that her plan was a success.

Her next tour took her to Geneva and Lockport, New York, Cleveland and Toledo, Ohio, Ypsilanti and Detroit, Michigan, and on the return trip to Ashtabula, Ohio, Rochester and Dansville, New York. Her fee was a hundred dollars in every place excepting Dansville, but her lecture at this last place proved to be of importance. There she learned about the water cure, which later was to have an important influence upon her life. All these lectures on her third trip left a pleasant memory, except the one at Ashtabula, which for some reason did not go well.

She now arranged for a much longer trip. She bought her ticket for Chicago, stopping to lecture at Laporte, Indiana. She reshaped her lecture somewhat for this trip, telling how her father had fought near that town under "Mad" Anthony Wayne. She lectured in Milwaukee, Evanston, Kalamazoo, Detroit, Flint, Galesburg, Des Moines, Rock Island, Muscatine, Washington, Iowa, Dixon, Illinois, Decatur, and Jacksonville. On her way north from Jacksonville, she was in a train wreck in which several people were injured. She also had an experience in an attempt to rob her, and she resolved never to travel by sleeper again when she had to go alone. She was very nearly as good as her word. Very rarely did she make use of a sleeping-car; she traveled by day when she could, and, when unable to do so, sat up in a corner of the seat and rested as best she could.

She lectured at Mount Vernon, Aurora, Belvidere, Rockford, and other Illinois cities, and at Clinton, Iowa.

In most of these cities she was entertained in the homes of distinguished people, Dorence Atwater sometimes staying at the hotel.

In Chicago she had good visits with John B. Gough and Theodore Tilton, both of whom were on the lecture platform, and she herself lectured in the Chicago Opera House.

Other lectures followed in Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, New York, and so on back to Washington. Then she took another tour through New England. She lectured in New Haven and found the people unresponsive, but she had a good time at Terryville, Connecticut. There Dorence Atwater was at home. It was characteristic of Clara Barton that at this lecture she insisted that Dorence should preside; not only so, but she called it his lecture and gave him the entire proceeds of that and the lecture at New Haven. It was a proud night for this young man, released from his two imprisonments, and she records that he presided well. She lectured again in Worcester and with better results than before, then extended her tour all over New England.

After this she made other long tours through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and States farther west. Now and then she records a disappointing experience, but in the main the results were favorable. She had no difficulty in making a return engagement; everywhere she was hailed as the Florence Nightingale of America. The press comments were enthusiastic; her bank account grew larger than it had ever been.

Clara Barton was now forty-seven years old. For eight years, beginning with the outbreak of the Civil War, she had lived in rooms on the third floor of a busi-

ness block. The two flights of stairs and the unpretentiousness of the surroundings had not kept her friends away. Her daily list of callers was a long one, and her evenings brought her so many friends that she spoke humorously of her "levees." But she had begun to long for a home of her own, which she now was well able to afford. Since the appropriation of Congress of fifteen thousand dollars and her earnings from her lectures, all of which she had carefully invested, she possessed not less than thirty thousand dollars in good interest-bearing securities. She had brought from Andersonville a colored woman, Rosa, who now presided over her domestic affairs. She spent a rather cheerless Christmas on her forty-seventh birthday in her old room on 7th Street, and determined not to delay longer. She bought a house. On the outside it looked old and shabby, but inside it was comfortable. On Tuesday, December 29, 1868, she packed her belongings. Next day she records:

December 30, 1868, Wednesday. Moved. Mr. Budd came early with five men. Mr. Vassall, Sally, and myself all worked, and in the midst of a fearful snowstorm and a good deal of confusion, I broke away from my old rooking of eight years and launched out into the world all by myself. Took my first supper in my own whole house at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Capitol Hill.

She had engaged her movers at a stipulated price of six dollars, but she was so happy with the result that she paid them ten dollars, which for a woman of Clara Barton's careful habits indicated a very large degree of satisfaction.

The next day, assisted by her colored woman Rosa and her negro man Uncle Jarret, and with some help from



two kindly neighbors, she set things to rights. It was a stormy day and she was tired, but happy to be in her home. She wrote in her diary: "This is the last day of the year, and I sometimes think it may be my last year. I am not strong, but God is good and kind."

It is pathetic that the joy of her occupancy of her new home should have been clouded by any forebodings of this character. Her premonition that it might be her last year came very near to being true. Heavy had been the strain upon her from the day when the war began, and the events of the succeeding years had all drawn upon her vitality. What occurred at the height of her success in Bordentown came again to her at the height of her career upon the lecture platform. She rode one night to address a crowded house, and she stood before them speechless. Her voice utterly failed. Her physicians pronounced it nervous prostration, prescribed three years of complete rest, and ordered her to go to Europe.

END OF VOLUME I









DATE DUE

6368

HV 569 .B3 B4  
Barton, William Eleazar,  
1861-1930.  
The life of Clara Barton,

00000

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY LIBRARY  
M HV569.B3 B4

The life of Clara Barton, founder of the



33525000787348

DISCARD

